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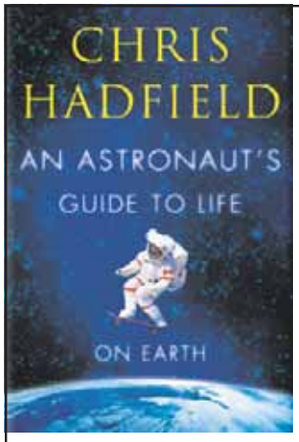

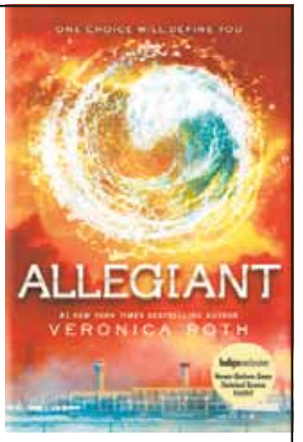

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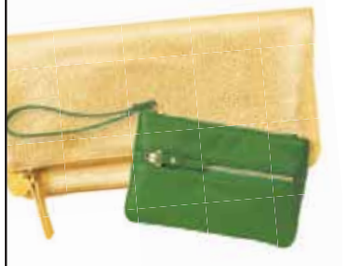

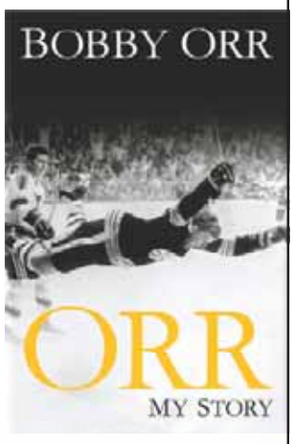

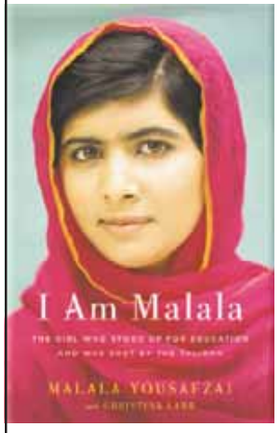

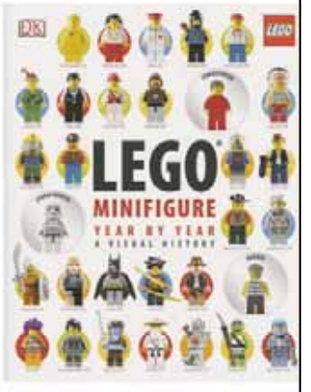

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ROLLING IN THE DEEP

IN WHICH THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE LEAD SHANNON TO CONTEMPLATE EXISTENCE PAGE 29

A road to connect 'our cultures ... our people'

At the signing of the S.W. ring-road agreement with the Tsuu T'ina Nation, Premier Alison Redford notes 'this road will truly strengthen links between our communities' PAGE 4

Fun of the life-threatening variety

Florida obstacle course includes zip-line over crocs. Good luck with that PAGE 26

JUDGE FREES PIT BULL SHOT IN FACE

Tara Sprayson was reunited with her pit bull Pig Wednesday evening, more than four months after he was taken into custody by the City of Calgary suffering from serious wounds. Pig was shot in the face by a police officer he jumped at during a traffic stop in July, but a judge ruled Wednesday the attack was the fault of police, not Pig's owners. Story, page 6. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Calgary to devote a decade of tax room to $520M transit fund

Decision day. Council makes half-billion-dollar decision on third and final day of budget deliberations

ROBSON FLETCHER
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In a monumental decision Wednesday, city council narrowly approved a plan to create a half-billion fund over the next 11 years to build a bus-only transitway that would run virtually the entire north-south length of the city and eventually be converted into an LRT line.

"It's not about right or left … it's not even about politics," said Coun. Shane Keating, who came up with the proposal. "What it's about is doing the right thing."

The idea was, however, quite controversial, and only passed by the narrowest of margins — an 8-7 vote.

Keating's plan will see use of the previously unallocated $52 million in "tax room" devoted each year from 2015 to 2024 into a pot of money dedicated to transit infrastructure called the "Green Line Fund," for a total of $520 million.

In 2014 only, the $52 million will be refunded to taxpayers — something that proved less controversial, passing by a 12-3 vote.

The "Green Line" is a proposed route in the city's 30-year transit plan that would run from the north-central end of Calgary to the southeast, starting as a dedicated bus route and eventually being converted into LRT tracks.

Keating described the plan as "the best way" to fill a "desperate need" for transit as quickly as possible, not only in his southeast Ward 12 but across the city.

Coun. Ward Sutherland, who campaigned ahead of October's municipal election on a platform of fiscal conservatism, said the $52 million should have been returned permanently to taxpayers.

Keating, himself, had advocated for returning the money, although he also campaigned strongly for more southeast transit infrastructure.

Coun. Ray Jones said his answer to Keating's plan was "no, no, no, and no," noting he heard "very loud and clear" from residents in his ward that they wanted the tax-room money returned once and for all.

"I think you've got to give it back because a lot of us campaigned on giving it back," Jones said.

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Wage deal. Alta. tables bill to end union arbitration

The Alberta government tabled legislation Wednesday aimed at revoking the right of its largest union to go to arbitration and substituting it with the government's own wage deal.

It also tabled a bill that will punish the union with steep fines and civil liabilities if it wages an illegal strike.

Finance Minister Doug Horner told reporters the government did not want to bring in legislation, but felt compelled to when contract talks broke down earlier this year and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees filed for binding arbitration.

"We did make a commitment to taxpayers that we would live within our means," Horner said as bills 45 and 46 were introduced.

He said the new wage deal must be in line with the multi-year wage freezes that Alberta doctors and teachers have already accepted.

The government wants a four-year deal, with wage freezes in the first two years followed by one per cent hikes in each of 2016 and 2017.

The AUPE represents 22,000 front-line government workers in a variety of fields, from corrections officers to social workers.

AUPE president Guy Smith said the bills are the beginning of the effective dismantling of collective bargaining in Alberta.

"There's two routes to resolve bargaining issues. One is strike action, whether it's legal or not. The other is arbitration. And they've taken both away," said Smith.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Coun. Shane Keating put forward a motion Wednesday that would see the $52 million in unallocated "tax room" refunded to taxpayers in 2014 and then devoted to a transit-infrastructure fund from 2015 to 2024. The motion was approved. Also pictured is Coun. Richard Pootmans. METRO FILE

Tax bills expected to drop in 2014

Credit an unusual city budget. Expect to see bills rise again in 2015

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Calgarians will get a one-time break from property-tax hikes next year, after city council approved a rather convoluted budget for 2014 that should result in a net decrease in many homeowners' total tax bills.

The exact amounts aren't clear yet — the city's chief financial officer is still crunching numbers — but it appears likely that plenty of residential property owners will see their taxes drop next year.

That's because council approved a 2014 budget that includes a five per cent tax increase, but also includes a one-year-only rebate of the $52 million in "tax room" that has been the subject of so much discussion.

The net result should be a decrease in taxes for many, if not most, homeowners.

Here's why.

An earlier version of the budget included a 6.1 per cent tax hike, and city CFO Eric Sawyer said, in that scenario, refunding the $52 million would result in a net tax decrease of one per cent on residential properties.

Council then shaved that 6.1 per cent hike down to five per cent, so the net tax decrease should be even larger.

Non-residential properties could still see a tax increase, however.

After three days of budget deliberations, the final fiscal plan for 2014 passed by an 8-7 vote.

It includes a freeze on salaries for the mayor and city council, a 1.8 per cent cap on maximum-pay increases for non-unionized staff, and a moratorium on overtime for the top three tiers of city management, effective Jan. 1.

Council also made a small, across-the-board reduction to all city departments' budgets, with the exception of the Calgary Police Service.

Other budget nuggets

The city benefited from $1.2 million in net favourable changes to expenses and revenues, which reduced the tax hike by 0.1 percentage points.

- Rather than hiking the monthly household drainage fee from $9.20 to $9.55, council opted to use a reserve fund to cover up to $20 million in flood repairs, largely to fix riverbanks.

Tsuu T'ina Nation Chief Roy Whitney-Onespot was joined by Alberta Premier Alison Redford, left, and provincial Transportation Minister Ric McIver to sign a transportation and utility corridor agreement Wednesday that allows the construction of Calgary's southwest ring-road leg. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

'Historic' ring road agreement signed

'Mutual respect.' Premier Alison Redford says the project will 'strengthen links' with Tsuu T'ina Nation

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Tsuu T'ina Nation Chief Roy Whitney-Onespot said an agreement he signed Wednesday to pave the way for Calgary's southwest ring road was outmatched in importance only by the 1887 signing of Treaty 7, which gave his people their reserve lands.

The chief was joined by Alberta Premier Alison Redford and Transportation Minister Ric McIver for what he described as a "historic" day — all three put their names to the transportation and utility corridor agreement that allows the transfer of money and land.

The southwest ring road deal, voted through by Tsuu T'ina members Oct. 24, will see the band give up about 425 hectares of land in exchange for $275 million, 2,150 hectares of new land and an extra $65 million in compensation.

"A clear majority of Tsuu T'ina people voted for a better future for our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren … Tsuu T'ina has decided to secure our lands, our language, our traditions and our culture by approving this deal," Whitney-Onespot told a crowd gathered for the signing that included former band chiefs, current council members and other friends of the community, including Colleen Klein, wife of the late Alberta premier Ralph Klein.

Whitney-Onespot also hinted at the launch of a new youth initiative that he said will directly involve the nation's younger members in decisions affecting the future of its lands.

Project details

- McIver pledged the southwest ring road leg will be ready no later than seven years from the day the project is approved by the federal government.
- Federal Tories have expressed support, but it's unclear when — or if — it will be given the green light.

Redford conceded talks on the ring-road span long before most in attendance were born, but said she believes her government and Tsuu T'ina shared "mutual respect."

"This road will truly strengthen links between our communities, it will allow for more collaboration, co-operation and, I think, partnership among our schools, our cultures and our people," she said.

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Pig the pit bull is seen shortly after being shot while lunging at a Calgary police officer in mid-July. METRO FILE

Pig the pit bull freed by judge

Shot in the face.
City prosecutor sought vicious designation after dog bit an officer

JEREMY NOLAIS
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Owners of a Calgary pit bull cried tears of joy Wednesday after learning he would be returned to them more than four months after being shot in the face by a police officer.

By nightfall, one-year-old Pig was home safe and wrapped in the arms of owner Tara Sprayson.

"It's been crazy," Sprayson said through tears. "He does need to go to obedience school ... but we are just so happy to have him home."

Trouble began for Pig on July 15, when the truck he was in along with Sprayson and her husband was pulled over by police.

Sprayson claims she warned police that Pig was young and easily frightened, but an officer went ahead and opened the door leading to the backseat.

Pig lunged at the officer, biting them in the abdomen before being shot.

The police officer was wearing a protective vest and did not suffer any injuries.

Pig survived the shooting but remained in the custody of city and animal-bylaw services for months while undergoing assessment. A prosecutor representing the city had sought to designate Pig a vicious dog and potentially have him euthanized.

But lawyer Jim Hittel, who represented Sprayson's husband on three charges, told Metro the judge found insufficient evidence to suggest Pig would harm another person in the future.

Province to review how it handles foster-care deaths

Alberta's human services minister says a public review of the foster-care system will include how the deaths of foster children are investigated and reported.

Dave Hancock has promised a roundtable conference of opposition members and stakeholders to explore issues raised in reports earlier this week.

"What does the public need to know, how does that information get released, and if the death review system that we have now is not considered to be satisfactory, what do we need to do?" Hancock said at a news conference Wednesday.

The reports also found that rule changes and oversight problems have led to some of those deaths being wrongly attributed to natural causes.

Wildrose health critic Heather Forsyth told the legislature that an inquiry is the only way to prevent further deaths.

"We must learn why these tragedies keep occurring. Until we do, how can we know what steps to take to prevent them in the future?" THE CANADIAN PRESS

Origin

Newspapers that broke the story said a lengthy investigation of records revealed the province has failed to publicly report the deaths of 89 foster children in the last 14 years.

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Dave Bradley of "BitcoinBrains" says business has been booming since he opened what's claimed to be Calgary's first physical exchange in Kensington. BRYAN WEISMILLER/METRO

BitcoinBrains boomin': Owner

Kensington. New Bitcoin store advertised as Calgary's first brick-and-mortar location

Quoted

"The response has been really overwhelming."
Dave Bradley

BRYAN WEISMILLER
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Bitcoin trader Dave Bradley concedes it likely seemed somewhat "shady" when he was meeting customers in Calgary coffee shops to swap Canadian currency for digital dollars.

Now sitting in his newly opened shop — billed as the first brick-and-mortar location in the city — Bradley says any potential suspicions didn't stop customers from coming back again and again.

In fact, he claims a surging business and a desire to show accountability compelled him to open "BitcoinBrains," a storefront in Kensington. And things have apparently only picked up since — with an estimated 80 per cent of customers coming back.

"The response has been really overwhelming," he said.

Bitcoin users trumpet the so-called crypto-currency for its convenience, utility and anonymity. By trading on a peer-to-peer basis online, users avoid the fees associated with dealing in traditional money.

In July, media reported an Edmonton café was the first Alberta business to accept Bitcoin transactions.

At Bradley's store, the average client reportedly spends $1,000 to $2,000.

Flood victims likely to be in modulars by Christmas

It's likely 200 flood-displaced students will be in their new modular classroom in Calgary's southwest before Christmas, says the regional flood recovery minister.

For nearly three months, the students of the flood-damaged Elbow Park School have been studying at Eugene Coste.

But Rick Fraser, the associate minister of regional flood recovery and reconstruction, said he believes those kids will soon move to a more permanent modular-classroom home located in the fields at Earl Grey School.

But Fraser cautioned the Calgary Board of Education will make the final decision on an occupancy date — the board had originally expressed hope to parents that the modulars would be delivered and set up by the province for the first day of school in early September.

But Fraser still credited "amazing" work done by contractor Enzo Developments Inc. to establish the modulars in both Calgary and High River, where 700 kids were forced from their schools.

"Even with the delays, this group came in well under the projected timeline other groups had proposed," Fraser said. "The challenge is not only in labour during the time of the recovery ... there's also materials."

Frank Coppinger, the Calgary Board of Education's superintendent for infrastructure, said in a statement Wednesday that Enzo made his organization aware of an occupancy permit for the modulars Tuesday. "CBE staff are currently engaged in fit-up activities and are expected to complete this work at the end of this week," Coppinger said. "It is anticipated that Enzo Developments will be involved in clearing any identified building deficiencies." JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

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CBE comms-staff numbers exceed other boards, but is comparison fair?

Navigator. Trustee chair pressing for more info on hiring of 'high-stakes' firm

JEREMY NOLAIS
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Calgary's public school board stayed mum Wednesday on how much it's spending on communications work this year, why it employs more staff in that area than other major Alberta metro boards and why it hired an outside firm to seemingly do work in the same area.

Metro first reported Tuesday that the Calgary Board of Education has paid tens of thousands since last year for "specialized strategic services and expertise" from Navigator, a well-known and self-proclaimed "high-stakes communications firm."

This comes despite the organization already employing 23 people in its communications department.

By comparison, Edmonton's public school board said Wednesday it has 15 people in that area. Calgary's Catholic School District has four and Edmonton's Catholic School District has just two, with some sporadic help from others in its marketing department.

The CBE is, however, the largest school board in Alberta, with more than 110,000 kids enrolled this year.

Even so, a Metro analysis determined the board still employs one communications staff member for every 4,815 kids. That compares to 5,563 kids per communications staff member within Edmonton public, 12,750 kids per member with Calgary Catholic and 18,714 kids per member with Edmonton Catholic.

Trustee chair Sheila Taylor avoided discussing Navigator Wednesday, but she said she had put in requests for more information. She also called for transparency when asked about whether the public has a right to know what the CBE spends on communications and legal services — the latter is another withheld financial item that Metro has been told is included in the budget belonging to Chief Supt. Naomi Johnson.

"Whenever we're talking about how we're spending tax dollars, we need to be open and transparent with our budgets, with all of that information," Taylor said. "Certainly I'm curious about spending in each and every one of our departments and hopeful as we move forward as a group — as a board — that we focus on ensuring we're spending every dollar in a wise manner."

Follow Jeremy Nolais on Twitter @Metro_Nolais

In Edmonton

Edmonton's public school board, which has the second-highest number of communications staff after the Calgary Board of Education among major Alberta metro boards, said it will spend $2.5 million in that area in 2013-14.

Calgary Board of Education trustee chair Sheila Taylor has asked for more information about the organization's involvement with communications firm Navigator. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Health minister mulls private ambulance work

Health Minister Fred Horne
METRO FILE

The Alberta government is considering turning as much as one-third of the ambulance work being done by Emergency Health Services over to someone else, possibly private contractors.

Health Minister Fred Horne says that would include inter-hospital transfers, which are often from long-term care facilities or nursing homes to hospitals for diagnostic tests.

Horne says they've got to make sure they're using the right equipment and the most highly trained personnel for emergencies.

Alberta Heath Services statistics show 400,000 ambulance trips per year in Alberta, with 30 per cent of them for inter-hospital transfers.

Horne says it's not a problem now but an aging population could put more pressure on the system.

Horne's comments come as municipal leaders have expressed concern about ambulance availability.

"It was done in the past prior to consolidation of ground ambulance under AHS," said Horne. "There were some parts of the province that had contracts with other providers to do this kind of work.

"I know that in Ontario and B.C. this has been a really big issue and there's different ways to tackle it, but we're committed to looking at this."

Horne said 9-5 per cent of calls are now being dispatched by three call centres provincewide, and when dispatchers look at the map they can see where all ambulances are located. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Break-in

Suspected thief found electrocuted in Enmax station

A man is dead after an apparent electrocution during what Calgary police believe was a power substation break-in

Enmax says crews went to investigate an overnight blip in their electricity system.

They discovered a man lying inside a compound in a southeast neighbourhood.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Highway 21

Dozens of cars caught in pileup

RCMP in Strathcona County had a 40-car pileup to deal with Wednesday morning as heavy fog appears to have led to the massive collision.

Police closed Highway 21 for southbound traffic at Highway 14 and for northbound traffic at Township Road 510 for several hours to deal with the crash.

RCMP reported only minor injuries.

METRO

Labour

CBE ratifies deals with workers

Calgary's public school board has ratified agreements with both its teachers and skilled-trades workers.

Teachers will see a 0.4 per cent bump in their salary grid in 2014, a two per cent bump in 2015 and a one per cent lump-sum payment to be paid out by Dec. 30, 2015.

Trades workers will see increases of two per cent and 0.5 per cent next year.

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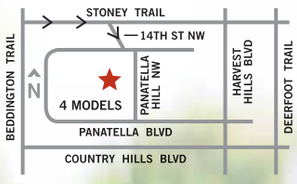

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The city's transportation department reports cycling traffic has increased nearly four times on 7 Street S.W., pictured here, since barrier-separated bike lanes were installed earlier this year. BRYAN WEISMILLER/METRO

City pitches cycle track on 1 Street S.E.

Pathway network. Plan would support bike-friendly atmosphere in business hub

BRYAN WEISMILLER
bryan.weismiller@metronews.ca

As Calgary lays out blueprints to build separated bike-only lanes on 1 Street S.E. from river-to-river, even proponents of the plan are pushing for an east-west track to connect the increasingly mega cycling and pathway network.

The proposal, which is the focus of a series of open houses starting Thursday, sees a two-way cycle track built on the east side of the road from the Bow River pathway through downtown and the Beltline to the Elbow River.

If built next year, the lane would fit into the city's grander plans to build a more cycle-friendly downtown network.

Supporters note separated tracks are great for newbie cyclists who are afraid of trekking through hair-raising downtown traffic. That camp includes Kimberley Nelson, director of cycling advocacy group Bike Calgary.

But Nelson also stressed the need for an avenue corridor that would link to other cycling tracks such as 7 Street S.W. and another potential north-south route. A piecemeal network, she cautioned, could be confusing and lead to "bad behaviour" by the same beginner bikers that the network is designed to help.

"Obviously riding on the sidewalk is illegal," she said. "We know that; they know that. But when you leave them in the middle with these big gaps that's what's going to end up happening."

According to the city:

Roughly 12,000 bike trips are counted coming in and out of the central business district on a typical summer morning.

Fort McMoney. Alberta documentary game is 'like Grand Theft Auto' — just replace killing with learning

The latest National Film Board of Canada project is part documentary, part choose-your-own-adventure book, and part video game.

In Fort McMoney, players can explore boomtown Fort McMurray, Alta., and the politics of resource development by talking to dozens of real-world characters that were interviewed for the documentary game.

To start, players can choose to talk to a francophone carpenter who moved west for work, a waitress and car saleswoman making $10,000 a month, or an unemployed local who gets by collecting empty bottles and cans for the deposit money.

The questions a player asks the characters affects how the rest of the story plays out.

Creator David Dufresne and his team spent two years researching the politics and culture of the town and produced almost nine hours of video that can be interacted with during the course of the game. It can be played in English, French or German.

"It's like Grand Theft Auto for real, but you don't kill," jokes Dufresne, who says he wanted to experiment with interactive storytelling because he thought it would be more engaging.

"I think with a game you can learn a lot. It's a game but it's very serious."

Dufresne's pitch to the NFB was intriguing given the organization's focus on reinventing documentaries in an increasingly digital world, says Monique Simard, director general of the NFB's French program.

"The explosion of different platforms and the possibility to have no constraints in time limits or formats makes it possible today to tell stories in much different ways," says Simard.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Beijing cracks down on pollution one barbecue grill at a time

China. Country's concern about particulate pollution from open-air barbecues criticized on social media sites

Beijing is waging a controversial war against air pollution.

Authorities in the capital have destroyed more than 500 open-air barbecues "to cut PM2.5" — the tiny particulate matter in the air that can enter deep into the lungs.

Photos carried by state media showed workers on Tuesday cutting pieces of metal with sparks flying as city wardens looked on.

Citizens online ridiculed the exercise, suggesting authorities should focus on bigger sources of pollution.

Chinese police observe as a worker breaks down confiscated open-air barbecues in Beijing's war to tame PM2.5 pollution. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A media officer at Beijing's Xicheng district administration bureau said the hundreds of barbecue grills were confiscated over a three-month campaign and cut up so they couldn't be used again. She refused to give her name, as is common with Chinese officials.

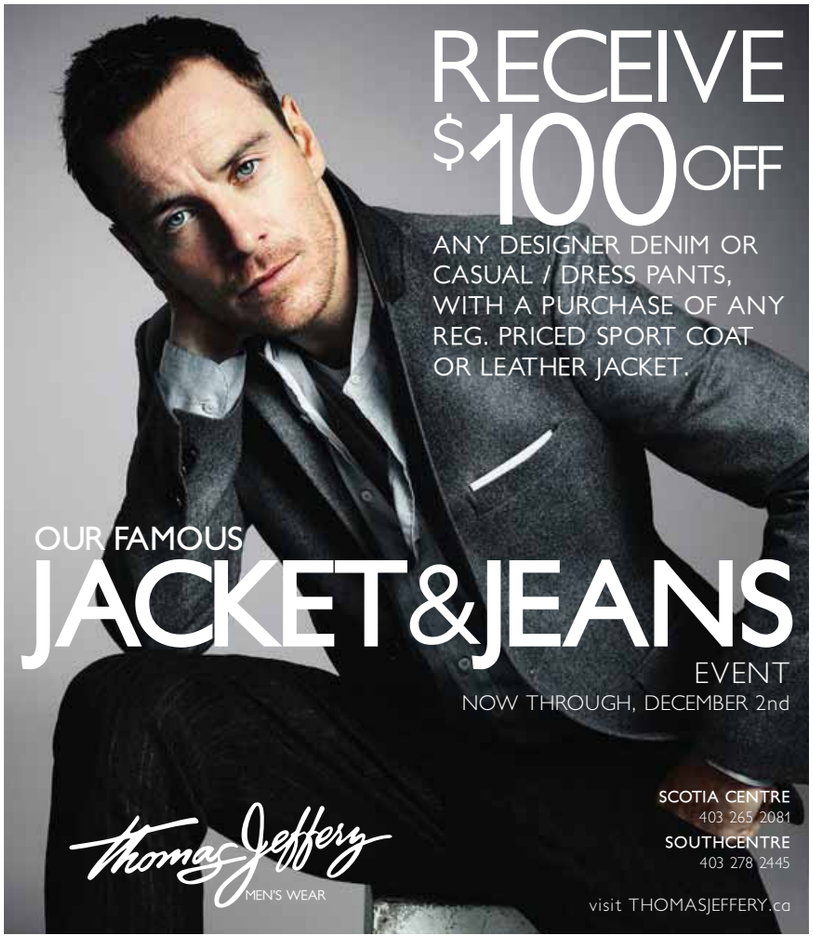
Environmental campaigner Ma Jun said residents had complained to environmental agencies about the odour and smoke from open-air barbecues. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Environmentalist

Vehicle emissions 'should be priority'

"This action will help local residents, but to deal with the bigger air-quality problem we need to have priorities and I think one of the major priorities should still be the motor-vehicle emissions,'' said environmental campaigner Ma Jun.

He said the focus should be on improving the fuel quality and emissions control of heavy-duty diesel trucks, while involving surrounding regions, not just Beijing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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Australian court finds Toronto ballerina was killed by angry lover

In a fit of rage. Simon Gittany convicted of throwing Lisa Harnum to her death after discovering her plans to return to Canada

The day before Scarborough ballerina Lisa Harnum plunged to her death from a 15th-floor balcony in Australia, her mother pleaded with her to come home and escape her abusive lover.

Harnum, 30, a former student at Dr. Norman Bethune Collegiate, planned to take that advice, but stayed one more day in her Sydney apartment with her fiancé, 40-year-old Simon Gittany.

Gittany was convicted of murder on Wednesday in a Sydney court as Harnum's mother, Joan, looked on, clutching a doll believed to have belonged to her daughter. Gittany's sentencing is scheduled for Feb. 5.

Justice Lucy McCallum accepted the prosecution's contention that Gittany threw his fiancée off their balcony on the morning of July 20, 2011, in a fit of rage after he discovered she planned to return to Canada.

Harnum was remembered as a gentle, positive person in an online tribute page by friends, including Alex Melconian, who knew her at Dr. Norman Bethune. In an interview, Melconian remembered her as "always very positive. She had a great smile."

After Harnum's mother heard the verdict, she told reporters the case is a "powerful wake-up call to young women — and to parents, siblings and friends of these women — to be aware of the warning signs of a controlling relationship and to take a proactive approach to assisting them."

Joan Harnum said there are no winners in this case and that "two families have had their lives dramatically changed forever."

On the morning of her death, Harnum had packed a suitcase and was trying to leave for home, but Gittany discovered her plans and dragged her back into their apartment, the court heard.

A hidden pinhole security camera in the apartment building showed Gittany grabbing Harnum and dragging her back into their apartment just 69 seconds before her death.

Another hidden camera in an elevator showed him apparently overcome by grief after Gittany fell to her death.

In his defence, Gittany painted his former partner as suicidal and said she "lost her footing" after climbing over the balcony's glass balustrade railing. He said he was attempting to pull her to safety when she fell, but police reported there were no fingerprints on the balustrade.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Remembering Lisa

"She loved to dance. She was a ballerina but not only a ballerina. (She loved) dancing in general. ... She cared a lot for people." Alex Melconian, friend of Lisa Harnum

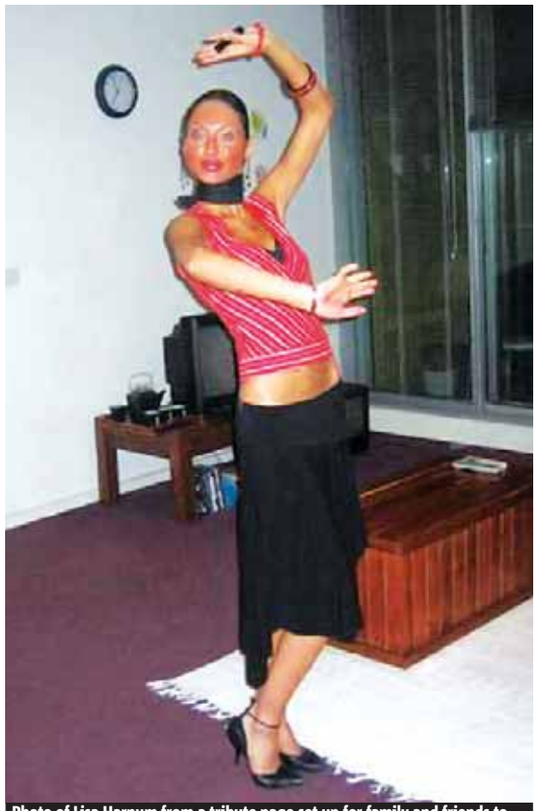

Photo of Lisa Harnum from a tribute page set up for family and friends to gather, share their memories and celebrate the life of Harnum. CONTRIBUTED

Kid hacker gets probation

A Montreal hacker who was just 12 when he crippled several provincial government websites and shared information in exchange for video games has been sentenced to 18 months of probation.

The 14-year-old pleaded guilty in October to attacks that occurred in 2012 at the height of Quebec's student protests.

The group for which he acted, Anonymous, was particularly vocal against the then-Liberal government.

A series of attacks targeting government-related websites ensued under a campaign dubbed "Operation Quebec" in response to the law, which has since been repealed.

The young man's identity is protected under youth laws.

On Wednesday, the Crown and defence recommended the probation sentence.

The boy's lawyer said the attacks weren't politically motivated and that his client wasn't old enough to grasp just how much damage his actions could cause. The accused had earlier told the court his main motivation for trading data was to obtain video games.

Youth court Judge Michele Lefebvre agreed, saying the actions were not of a criminal but of a young man who couldn't have known the extent of the consequences.

Lefebvre told the accused she thought the sentence was reasonable and is the best way of assuring he does not re-offend.

"I wish you good luck and hope not to see you here again," Lefebvre told the accused. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Giant Louis Vuitton suitcase booted out of Red Square

Tourists and visitors pass by a two-storey Louis Vuitton suitcase erected near the Kremlin, right, at Red Square in Moscow, Russia, Wednesday. Politicians didn't like it, the public didn't like it, so the gigantic Louis Vuitton suitcase is being booted out of the square. The GUM department store, left, which is responsible for the nine-metre-high, 30-metre-long construction, promised Wednesday that it would be dismantled. The construction is part of an exhibition called The Soul of Travel, marking Vuitton's 150th anniversary and was to open on Dec. 2. Louis Vuitton said the construction was a copy of a model owned by a Russian noble, Prince Vladimir Orlov. PAVEL GOLOVKIN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlusconi kicked out of Parliament

Not going quietly. Former premier has relaunched his Forza Italia party and he still commands millions of loyal supporters

The Italian Senate on Wednesday expelled three-time ex-premier Silvio Berlusconi from Parliament over his tax fraud conviction, ending his two-decade legislative run for now, but not his political career.

Berlusconi has warned that the unprecedented move would embarrass Italy internationally, and he maintained his defiance even as the Senate voted, addressing a cheering crowd outside of his Roman palazzo a short walk away.

Even though he won't hold a seat in Parliament for at least six years, the 77-year-old Berlusconi pledged to remain involved in politics and urged his followers not to despair — noting that other political leaders are not lawmakers.

Supporters, including Berlusconi's 28-year-old girlfriend, who had a Forza Italia flag wrapped around her shoulders against the cold, were treated to a video montage of Berlusconi's greatest political hits from a career that began in 1994 when he first came into power with a political party named for a soccer chant — Let's Go Italy.

"For us, he will always be there," said Marilda Antonello as she held a banner reading: "The law is not equal for everyone. Sick justice."

The Senate vote on whether to remove Berlusconi from the chamber stems from a 2012 law that bans anyone sentenced to more than two years in prison from holding or running for public office for six years. His lawyers claim the law is unconstitutional and have questioned why there's a rush to expel him while legal challenges are still pending.

Italy's high court on Aug. 1 upheld Berlusconi's tax fraud conviction and four-year prison term. The prison term was reduced automatically to one year under a general amnesty; he will serve his time either under house arrest or through public service.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bitter words

"We are here on a bitter day, a day of mourning for democracy."
Silvio Berlusconi

Silvio Berlusconi and his girlfriend Francesca Pascale leave after he addressed a rally in Rome, Wednesday. ROBERTO MONALDO, LAPRESSE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Tough sentences handed down in Egypt's crackdown

Heavy hand. Situation threatens to fragment a coalition of liberal and secular groups that supported the military

Egyptian authorities on Wednesday took a heavy hand against both Islamist and secular opponents, handing down heavy prison sentences to a group of female supporters of the ousted Islamist president — including teenagers as young as 15 — and ordering the detention of two dozen secular activists, all for participating in protests.

The moves mark what critics say is a bolder determination by Egypt's military-backed government to silence dissent, continuing a crackdown on Islamists since the military's ouster of President Mohammed Morsi, while suppressing secular activists who supported his removal but also accuse the new leadership of restoring a system as autocratic as Morsi's toppled predecessor, Hosni Mubarak.

Supporter of ousted president Morsi in the prisoner's dock in Alexandria. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Images from the courtroom in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria showed 21 young female defendants in white head scarves and white prison uniforms, handcuffed. Among them were seven teenagers aged 15 and 16, who were sentenced to prison terms until they turn 18. The rest — age 18 to 22 — were sentenced to 11 years in prison. A day earlier saw the beating and dragging of secular activists. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Volcanic alert heightened

A worker who is covered with volcanic ash from an eruption of Mount Sinabung takes a break at a coffee plantation in Guru Kinayan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Sinabung's alert status was raised to the highest level on Sunday after eruptions. BINSAR BAKKARA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pakistan

Americans criticized over drone deaths

A Pakistani political party launched an attack on the CIA drone program on Wednesday, turning up the heat on an issue that the government in Islamabad has tried to manage without sparking a crisis with the U.S.

The party revealed what it said was the name of the CIA's top spy in the country and called for him to be tried for murder.

American missile attacks targeting Islamic militants in Pakistan's northwest have long been a source of tension.

Friction has increased recently with two especially contentious strikes: one killed the Pakistani Taliban's leader as the government prepared to invite him to hold peace talks, and another outside the tribal region. But the U.S. has shown no willingness to abandon the program. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Rob Ford. Judge allows release of 'significant' new police drug case data

More information on the "extensive" police investigation into disgraced Toronto Mayor Rob Ford should be released as it is of "very significant public interest," a judge ruled Wednesday.

Portions of the police document that were previously released showed former staffers alleged the mayor was intoxicated at work, drank while driving and associated with suspected prostitutes.

The document, containing allegations not proven in court, was filed in the drug case of Ford's friend Alexander Lisi, though it mostly focuses on the mayor. The actual release is on hold until Dec. 6. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"The actions of the mayor are a matter of very significant public interest and concern."
Justice Ian Nordheimer

Toronto Mayor Rob Ford has denied consorting with prostitutes and insists he is not an alcoholic or drug addict. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Feedback. Sheriff shocked

A U.S. sheriff who has just charged a town mayor with drug offences said Wednesday it's a head-scratcher why crack-smoker Rob Ford is still in office — and out of jail.

Gordon Smith, a sheriff from Bradford County in Florida, said he's watched the Ford scandal unfold with amazement. "He's so flamboyant, he's out there, he's kind of smearing it in Torontonians' faces"

Smith said he wouldn't put up with illicit drug activity, regardless of who is involved. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Generic 'hillbilly heroin' green-lit in Canada

Banned in U.S. Ottawa officials approve India drugmaker's take on oxycodone despite warnings from experts south of the border

Oxycodone is often referred to as "hillbilly heroin." The U.S. warns about its generic form. GRAEME ROY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Health Canada has approved a more dangerous, generic, form of oxycodone just as U.S. officials urge their Canadian counterparts to ban such formulations of the painkiller, which is often known as "hillbilly heroin."

The green light to Ranbaxy, India's biggest drug maker, came soon after Gil Kerlikowske, director of the White House Office of Drug Control Policy, reminded Health Minister Rona Ambrose of the dangers posed by the generic forms of the opioid.

The U.S. has banned generic oxycodone because it's too easy for addicts to snort or inject. Only tamper-resistant forms of the drug can be sold stateside.

American officials say the U.S. is dealing with a painkiller abuse epidemic that is killing tens of thousands of people a year.

Ambrose hinted last month she was looking into the issue of tamper-resistance and signalled the government would expand its national anti-drug strategy.

She added the Tories are also attempting to tighten licensing rules that would help prevent the trafficking of addictive prescription drugs.

Health Canada defended itself, saying it "rigorously" assesses every drug's safety and efficacy.

"These decisions are made by experts in the department based on science; the minister is not consulted on day-to-day drug approvals," said spokesperson Leslie Meerburg. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fast facts

What you need to know about oxycodone.

- **What is it?** A powerful narcotic used to treat moderate to severe short-term or long-term pain, as well as to treat terminally-ill patients.
- **What does it do?** It produces an opiate-like effect similar to morphine and can lead to abuse.
- **Brand names?** OxyContin, Percocet, Endocet, Oxycocet, Percodan, Endodan, Oxycodan, Supeudol, OxylR, OxyNEO.
- **How is it abused?** Generic forms of the drug can be chewed or crushed and then inhaled or injected. The oxycodone is then absorbed rapidly and produces a heroin-like euphoria.

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An activist is detained in Moscow in 2009. As the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi approach, Russia has been saying a law banning homosexual "propaganda" does not discriminate against gays. ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO/AP PHOTO

Kremlin ups its anti-gay stance

...while placating the West. Government-controlled channel demonizes gay couples as part of homophobic rhetoric ramp up

Anyone who switched on Russian TV recently might have been forgiven for thinking the Kremlin was relaxing its hard line on gays: Images of rainbow flags and a happy same-sex couple looking adoringly at their child flashed across the screen.

But the show, with its horror film music and juddering camera work, was another swipe at the gay community — not a gust of tolerance. The force behind it is one of Russia's top propagandists, whose programs have helped to bring criminal charges against others on President Vladimir Putin's unofficial black list.

The prime-time broadcast on state television points to the double-game the Kremlin is playing on gay rights.

State homophobia

"There is always Russia for Russians and then Russia for the West."

Anton Krasovsky, Russian journalist fired from a Kremlin-controlled TV station after coming out as gay, talking about the government's double standard on its domestic anti-gay stance ahead of the Sochi games

To the West, as it prepares to host the Winter Olympics, Russia has sought to extend reassurances that a law passed this summer banning homosexual "propaganda" does not discriminate against gays. To its domestic audience, the government has ramped up the anti-gay rhetoric, unifying its fraying electoral base with a popular refrain of traditional values.

"In order to make people interested in the government, it chose what it thinks are topics close to the people, like this one (the gay issue)," said Anton Krasovsky, a journalist who was fired after he came out as gay on air at a Kremlin-controlled TV station.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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People stand in front of a metal structure that buckled on part of the Itaquerao Stadium in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Part of the stadium that will host the 2014 World Cup opener collapsed on Wednesday, causing significant damage and killing two people, authorities said. NELSON ANTOINE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Deadly collapse at World Cup opening venue

Brazil. The Sao Paulo stadium, which cost nearly $360 million, is expected to seat nearly 70,000 for the opener

Construction

It wasn't the first problem with World Cup stadiums in Brazil.

- One worker died during construction of a stadium in the capital Brasilia last year and another in the Manaus venue in March.
- In April, another worker died at the construction site of the new Palmeiras stadium.
- In Rio, the stadium which will host athletics in the 2016 Olympics has been closed for several months because of fears that its roof could collapse.

Part of the stadium that will host the 2014 World Cup opener collapsed Wednesday, killing two workers and aggravating already urgent concerns Brazil won't be ready for soccer's signature tournament.

Brazil has been plagued by a series of setbacks including cost overruns, stadium delays, accidents, labour strife and massive street protests in the run-up to the June tournament, once envisioned as a coming-out party for South America's largest nation, which is also scheduled to host the Olympics in 2016.

Wednesday's accident at Sao Paulo's Itaquerao Stadium occurred when a construction crane crashed into a 500-ton metal structure that in turn cut through the outer walls of the venue.

Already, public prosecutors and a workers union in Sao Paulo were demanding an investigation into conditions at the venue.

Ricardo Trade, CEO of the local World Cup organizing committee, said authorities would determine if there is a need to suspend construction.

"There are seven months till the World Cup, not 10 days, so I don't believe this is going to cause delays. But there is absolutely no guarantee on this," Trade said in a telephone interview.

The accident could lead to recriminations between local organizers and world soccer's organization FIFA, which has set a December deadline for all 12 World Cup stadiums to be ready. The tournament begins June 12.

"I don't want to know about FIFA right now; we are worried about the families of the victims," said Andres Sanchez, former president of the Sao Paulo soccer club Corinthians, which is building the stadium. The club said workers will not return before a three-day mourning period.

One of the workers, 42-year-old Fabio Luis Pereira, was inside a truck that was hit by the metal structure. The other, 44-year-old Ronaldo Oliveira dos Santos, was resting in an area which was supposed to be off-limits.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manitoba. Racism threatens to drive business owner out of town

For the second time in several months, a restaurant owner in the small Manitoba community of Morris says she is being chased out of town by discrimination.

Thea Morris, the Jamaican-born owner of Thea's Diner, said Wednesday she has received an email referencing the Ku Klux Klan and has been told by one of her customers that people are avoiding her business because she is black.

And since the KKK email, some customers have been behaving strangely, she said. People who appear to be in their 50s and very well dressed come in, in groups of two or three, and quickly leave.

"They'll come in and sit down and order their beverage to start, and by the time you'd take the beverage to them, they would get up and walk out ... It has come across as intimidating," Morris said.

She opened her diner in June, in the same spot that used to house Pots N Hands, which was run by a gay couple.

Pots N Hands owner Dave Claringbould and his partner closed down in April. He said they were subjected to homophobic slurs, including one customer who asked whether the food contained disease.

Morris, who lives in Winnipeg, said she had hoped things would be different for her. Business was good in the summer, but customers mostly stopped coming at the end of August, she said. Then a series of strange events had her worried for her safety.

Someone left a dead hawk on the windshield of a worker's car, she said. When she placed an online ad for restaurant staff, she received a reply from someone who claimed to be linked to the Ku Klux Klan and who asked whether Morris residents were "still chasing colours" out of town, she added.

At one point, Morris said, a customer told her matter-of-factly what was going on.

"One older gentleman told me the reason people were not coming into my restaurant was because of my colour."

Morris has given notice to her landlord that she plans to leave by the end of December.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hold tight: Zip-line over vultures, alligators and crocodiles, oh my!

Take a ride on the wild side. One of Florida's oldest tourist attractions brings in adrenaline junkies with obstacle course

I was slowly crossing a swinging log bridge when I paused, sensing the alligator 12 feet below was staring at me.

The water around the 8-foot gator's enormous body began rippling rapidly. A second later, Big Al let out a deep bellow, as if to say, "If you fall, you're my lunch."

I was grateful to be strapped in a harness.

The bridge was part of a 49-station obstacle course that includes 10 zip lines at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm. It takes visitors over crocodiles, lemurs, giant tortoises, vultures and, of course, lots of alligators.

"It's just a totally different perspective. You can go to any zoo in the world and look at them through the glass, but you can't go anywhere and look at them over the top of the enclosures like you can here," said Scott Brown, who designed and now manages the Crocodile Crossing at the zoo.

The alligator farm is fascinating enough on foot. At 120 years old, it's among Florida's oldest tourist attractions.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"The most amazing, awesome thing I've done ever."

Ava Martin, 53, who lives just north of St. Augustine. She and her 21-year-old son Corey were taking the course for the second time.

Ava Martin zip lining over an alligator lagoon at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm. BRENDAN FARRINGTON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Highlights

The longest zip-line on the course is 300 feet, or the length of a football field. There are some very fast lines, requiring some quick breaking. There's also the occasional palm frond that harmlessly whacks your butt.

- "You'll see things that the public doesn't get to see," said Brown. "Whether it's other animal enclosures, animals getting moved, animals getting a vet visit, maybe getting blood drawn. And it's always exciting for the public to see a large alligator or even a small alligator getting caught, getting taped up and getting moved. You're always going to see something that nobody else is looking at."

Random biz fact of the day

16%

There has been a 16 per cent growth in part-time positions, year over year.
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Market Minute

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Stores fight the lure of shopping in your pajamas

Click, click, click.
Brick-and-mortar outlets are in a battle with Amazon during this crucial shopping period

This holiday shopping season, it's Amazon vs. everyone else.

The online giant has attracted customers from big store chains like Walmart and Best Buy with low prices and convenient shipping. Now, stores are fighting to get customers back during the busiest shopping period of the year.

Stores are doing things like matching the lower prices on Amazon.com and offering the same discounts in stores as on their websites. For its part, Amazon is giving customers the option to pick up items at physical locations and adding Sunday delivery.

This Amazon.com shipping and receiving facility looks ready for battle. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

The two sides are dueling over shoppers like Jessica Danielle, a speechwriter who plans to do the bulk of her gift shopping on Amazon. "All the time spent going to brick-and-mortar stores, is it worth my time?" said Danielle, who lives in Washington, D.C. "I don't think so."

There's a lot at stake for both sides. Amazon has built a following, but wants to grow its business globally. Meanwhile, brick-and-mortar retailers struggle to keep shoppers from using their stores as showrooms to test out and try on items before buying them for less on Amazon.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Make or break time

It's high stakes time in retail.

- Both online and brick-and-mortar retailers can make up to 40 per cent of their annual revenue in November and December.
- Holiday sales are expected to rise 3.9 per cent to $602.1 billion, according to The National Retail Federation.

Focus on commerce

Pushing 'economic diplomacy' top priority for Canada

The Harper government says it wants Canadian diplomats in foreign countries to re-channel their energies and resources into advancing the country's commercial interests.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Home mortgages

Consider phasing out CMHC insurance: IMF

Ottawa should consider phasing out insuring home mortgage through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., the International Monetary Fund said Wednesday.

Such a recommendation, surprising from an international financial organization, appears to side with Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, who has recently questioned whether the federal government should be in the business of insuring higher-risk mortgages at all.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

A head above the rest

Andy Scott stands with Clydesdale horses Duke and Baron and Donna Auchinvole during a topping out ceremony at The Kelpies on Wednesday in Falkirk, Scotland. Construction work has been completed on Scott's Kelpies, the world's largest pair of equine sculptures and one of the U.K.'s tallest pieces of public art at 30 metres tall. JEFF J MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

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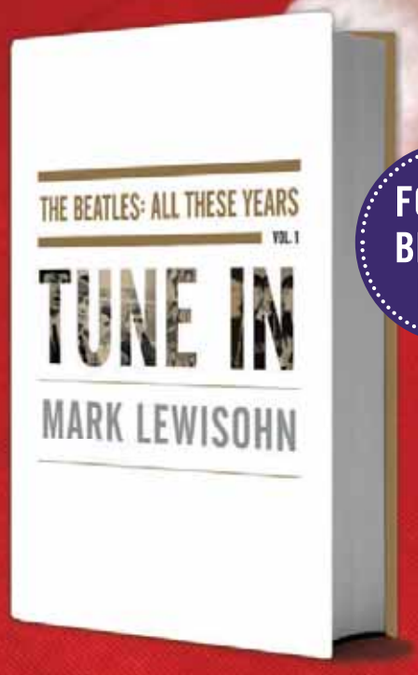

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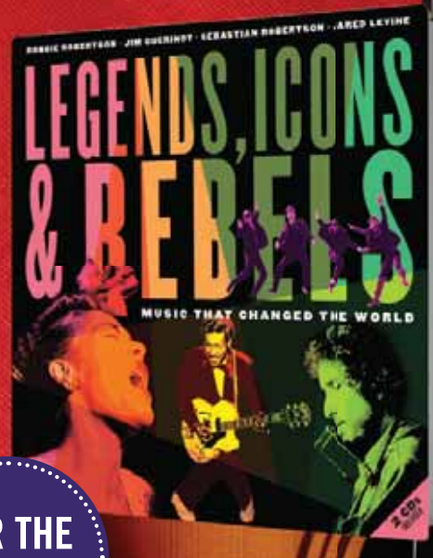

FOR THE ROCKER

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Will you still love me if I malfunction?

Console passion. Xbox One, PS4 put devoted game lovers to the test with recent glitches

Gamers are, um, passionate about their consoles. Emanuel Jumatate hugs his new Xbox One after he purchased it last Friday. NAM Y. HUH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Move over, zombies. Step aside, terrorists. Aliens, out of the way.

There are a few new foes affecting gamers that are proving to be far more destructive than any on-screen villain.

With nicknames like "the blue light of death" and "the disc drive of doom," they're the game-ending glitches causing headaches for a few gamers who picked up the next-generation Xbox One and PlayStation 4 consoles at launch.

Microsoft Corp. said Monday it's replacing the Xbox One units of users who have reported systems that won't read discs, an issue dubbed "the disc drive of doom."

Sony Corp. announced after the debut of the PS4 earlier this month that it was replacing the units of users whose new consoles malfunctioned and displayed a pulsating blue light. The problem was given the moniker "the blue light of death."

While the issues seem to affect a minority of Xbox One and PS4 owners, the concerns could deter consumers who regularly play games on smartphones and mobile devices. Sony's PS4 costs $399. Microsoft's Xbox One cost $100 more and includes a Kinect sensor.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Don't sweat it. You can shelve your Sriracha hoarding plan ... for now

A judge has ordered a plant that produces the popular Sriracha chili sauce to stop emitting annoying odours.

Judge Robert H. O'Brien on Tuesday ruled in favour of the city of Irwindale, Calif., where Sriracha recently relocated, saying sauce maker Huy Fong Foods must stop any operations that could be causing the odours and make unspecified changes to mitigate them.

The company had no immediate comment.

The company has said there is no reason to close the plant now because harvest season and the subsequent grinding of red-hot jalapeno peppers — the key ingredient of the sauce — have passed.

As a result, the injunction might not have an immediate impact on the company's production or the nation's hot sauce supply as Huy Fong continues its year-round mixing and bottling.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Phew! There's no Sriracha chili sauce shortage, yet. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

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Douglas Coupland

Douglas Coupland's latest novel, Worst. Person. Ever., is available from Random House Canada.

Day 19

metronews.ca/temp

Kitchen nightmares

There's no pay, but you can have all the abuse you want

Would you do a job where you weren't paid, were endlessly berated, forced to use dangerous equipment and denied proper medical help? Welcome to the life of a kitchen apprentice in the cutthroat culinary scene.

At times, it's like a real-life Kitchen Nightmares episode where even the most seasoned staff are berated to the point of tears.

"It is common for some cooks to be thrown under the bus by others because they don't want to look bad," one Toronto sous-chef explains of his early days in the industry.

IRENE KUAN/METRO

Seasonal work

Santa: The ultimate temp

Seasonal work as Santa pays up to $100 an hour, according to a PayScale survey. But all that non-stop cheeriness can take a toll. One Santa told the New York Post he wasn't able to leave his chair to go to the bathroom and got hit in the head with a frying pan by a scared child.

VAWN HIMMELSBACH/FOR METRO

Temp Hits an All-Time Low

Do you have a special place you go to when you're at an all-time low? Some people have a place, me I just drive and drive, past the strip malls, past the light industrial zones and past the fallow fields. After watching Kyle enter the refinery I began thinking of the world and how it's changed, even in my short life. Countries like Greece that used to be normal countries, now gutted of their middle class and overnight turned into something new and nameless, a land with no economy but with pretty good coffee and smoking hot Wi-Fi. I got to thinking of bubbles—how all we do these days is lurch from bubble to bubble. Are we in a new bubble? Is the bubble about to burst? I'm afraid of bubbles and I'm sick of bubbles—and yet I'm addicted to bubbles. Go figure.

I drove past the under-construction subdivisions that died in 2008, their 2x4s turned the grey colour of moths. I wondered if we're addicted to the idea that society without a middle class isn't really society. I wondered if maybe back in the days of Detroit, jumbo refrigerators and the Beatles we tricked ourselves into thinking that the middle class equals the future—and without a middle class we can't see pictures in our heads of what tomorrow might be. I find it strange how politicians repeat the words 'middle class' over and over and over again, as if doing so will allow us to pretend it still exists, that it's not evaporating daily like a puddle on a road.

Night came and I was anywhere and nowhere when my phone buzzed—it was Mr. Xu—he was back in town! And he had his big surprise all ready for me at his short-term corporate lodging suite. I couldn't remember the last time I was ever happier to get a text.

I drove to The Executive Privilege Short-Term Corporate Lodging, and ran to room 307 where the nerdy but lovely Mr. Xu awaited me.

"Ah, hello capitalist lapdog. You be ready for grand surprise?"

"Shut up! I can't believe you're back!" I gave him a smooch and said, "Okay, dial me in. I am ready for your big surprise, buster."

"Apologize in advance if not good enough."

I drove to The Executive Privilege Short-Term Corporate Lodging, and ran to room 307 where the nerdy but lovely Mr. Xu awaited me.

"Show me your surprise!"

"Very well."

A dropcloth concealed what was supposed to be the main living area. Mr. Xu pulled it back and I bathed in the majesty of what I saw.

He said, "Pretty kickass sexy, don't you think?"

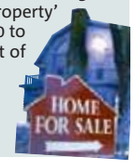
I sucked in some breath and said, "Mr. Xu, you have truly amazed me."

Before me, in beautiful rows and shelves, lay over a thousand unique pairs of sneakers that would crash eBay in a flash if they all went up for sale at once.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Random fact of the day

- DiedInHouse.com supposedly scours millions of records to find out whether someone has died at a specific address. Real Estate agents hate it because a 'stigmatized property' can lose 10 to 15 per cent of its value.



SOURCE: OMG-FACTS.COM

Random biz fact of the day

21%

That's a lot of people lying: 21 per cent of resumés state fraudulent degrees

SOURCE: NEXCAREER

The clock is ticking

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

TEMP is ... well, temporary

Douglas Coupland's 20-day novella is a pop-up project and will disappear from our website this Monday at 12:01 a.m. EST. If you've missed an instalment, there are still four days to catch up at temp.metronews.ca — before it is gone forever.

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John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

Don't you hate when co-workers get over-detailed when describing their colds?

For instance, I've got a cold that started with a throat so sore that ice cream went down like broken glass and broken glass went down like jagged steel. Then it morphed into a sinus headache that I'm sure — any scientist reading can back me up — involved a small, angry man inside my head moshing to Shipping Up to Boston. And now it's the sneezy stage where I'm moulding a mound of used tissues into the mountain from Close Encounters of the Third Kind in the hopes that aliens will take me to a planet where the common cold has been defeated.

Who needs to hear that level of detail? Nobody.

Fortunately, my co-workers haven't had to worry about it because I've been on my couch for two days wishing I had a girlfriend who would come coddle me and/or kill me with an axe.

I've stayed home because I'm not one of those office heroes who somehow believes they contribute while lying comatose at their keyboard, occasionally blowing their nose with the mouse pad. I figure my one-day absence has less impact than a particularly diverting Google doodle spreading throughout the newsroom.

During my down time, I've been reading how to avoid office colds. So in the fine tradition of has-been goaltenders telling current NHLers what they're doing wrong, or failed politicians explaining how to get elected, here are my tips on avoiding office illness:

Quitting Colds, Turkey: A Guide to Office Health

- Hand sanitizer is a misnomer, and can be used all over your body. Stepping under the wall dispenser and acting out a Miley Cyrus video until you're saturated head to toe will keep you disinfected AND keep your co-workers at a good distance for the rest of the day. Win-win.
- Licking your workspace clean hurts as much as it helps.
- Remember that vitamin C only works in conjunction with magnetic bracelets, garlic, echinacea and, sure, why not, Reiki.
- Though many people use sanitizing sprays, remember nothing gets your keyboard clean like dropping it into a bucket of water.
- Keep your hands clenched as fists so that every time you touch your face you punch yourself.
- A large hamster ball is probably not a practical way to cordon yourself off from co-workers, but it would be awesome.
- Remember that, in the bathroom, a 15-second hot-water scrub is absolutely necessary when somebody is watching. If you think you're alone, waving your hands under lukewarm water for a second is fine. If the only other person is in a stall, just running the water is often enough to complete the illusion.
- Cough in the face of people who are already sick, because what's the harm?

And those are my tips. I hope you found them helpful, particularly my co-workers, because I'm coming in today. Sorry. On the upside, you're not going to hear any details about my cold. Cough, cough, ahem.

ZOOM

Here, let me give you an arm with that

COURTESY DYSON

Man and machine get a little cosier

Think super-human strength is reserved for the big screen?

A team of engineers are encouraging you to think again after they developed the Titan Arm — a battery-powered robotic arm that gives users an extra 40 pounds in strength, and functions to rehabilitate those with back injuries by helping them to rebuild muscle and motor control. **METRO**

Dyson award winner

- The arm recently won the 2013 James Dyson Award, beating out 650 other projects from around the world.
- The team wins $45,000 to help commercialize their idea, with an additional $15,000 going to their school.
- jamesdysonaward.org

Inexpensive design

"Titan Arm is obviously an ingenious design, but the team's use of modern, rapid — and relatively inexpensive — manufacturing techniques makes the project even more compelling."

James Dyson said of the $2,000 prototype, which is significantly less than similar exoskeletons that run $100,000.

Tech advances make life easier

A team of four University of Pennsylvania mechanical engineering students spent eight months creating it.

The arm's shoulder is made of three joints that mimic the rotation of a human elbow, allowing for free range of use.

Plus it contains sensors that track motion and relay data to doctors for remote prognosis. **METRO**

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
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CONTRIBUTED

With Wi-Fi popping up everywhere from underground subways to in-flight planes, there's more reason to put your apps to work. Once the domain of cash-strapped students, texting over Wi-Fi's been gaining popular ground (cause who doesn't like saving money on their phone bills?). Before your next flight or trip underground, give these a try.

WhatsApp:
Works on Apple or Android phones, WhatsApp is among the most popular and lets you send texts (including pictures) to your other "WhatsApp friends." Only downside is, you have to convince all your pals to get the app, too.

Viber:
Similar to WhatsApp, but lets you send audio, video and even make VoIP calls too. Perfect for long distance pals.

Zipaclip:
For those who need a little more bandwidth for their texting needs, Zipaclip (as it sounds), lets you zip videos up to five minutes long, so you're no longer restricted to texting 30 second videos. Also, keeps them secure. Just in case.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: @thehappycity book says urban design that fosters social ties makes for a happy city. What makes your city a happy one?

@Canucklehead_ca: An ample supply of beer and .... umm, I .... I'll have to get back to you on this.

@Lowpass: being able to walk everywhere and the restaurants, bars and other venues that come with that.

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

Comments

RE: When A Stalker Strikes Online, published Nov. 26

I'm appalled the police can't do anything faster or sooner. Can't believe what this poor woman has been through, first with her brother's suicide and now this. It's just awful. This stalker should be prosecuted so they can't follow through with their threats. **KH posted to metronews.ca**

Hiding behind a computer to threaten someone shows you're a real wimp, pretty pathetic and probably a low life. **turtles have a say posted to metronews.ca**

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: calgaryletters@metronews.ca

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART
SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 36

The verdict is in on solo work

New album.
Paul Langlois Not Guilty about post Tragically Hip work

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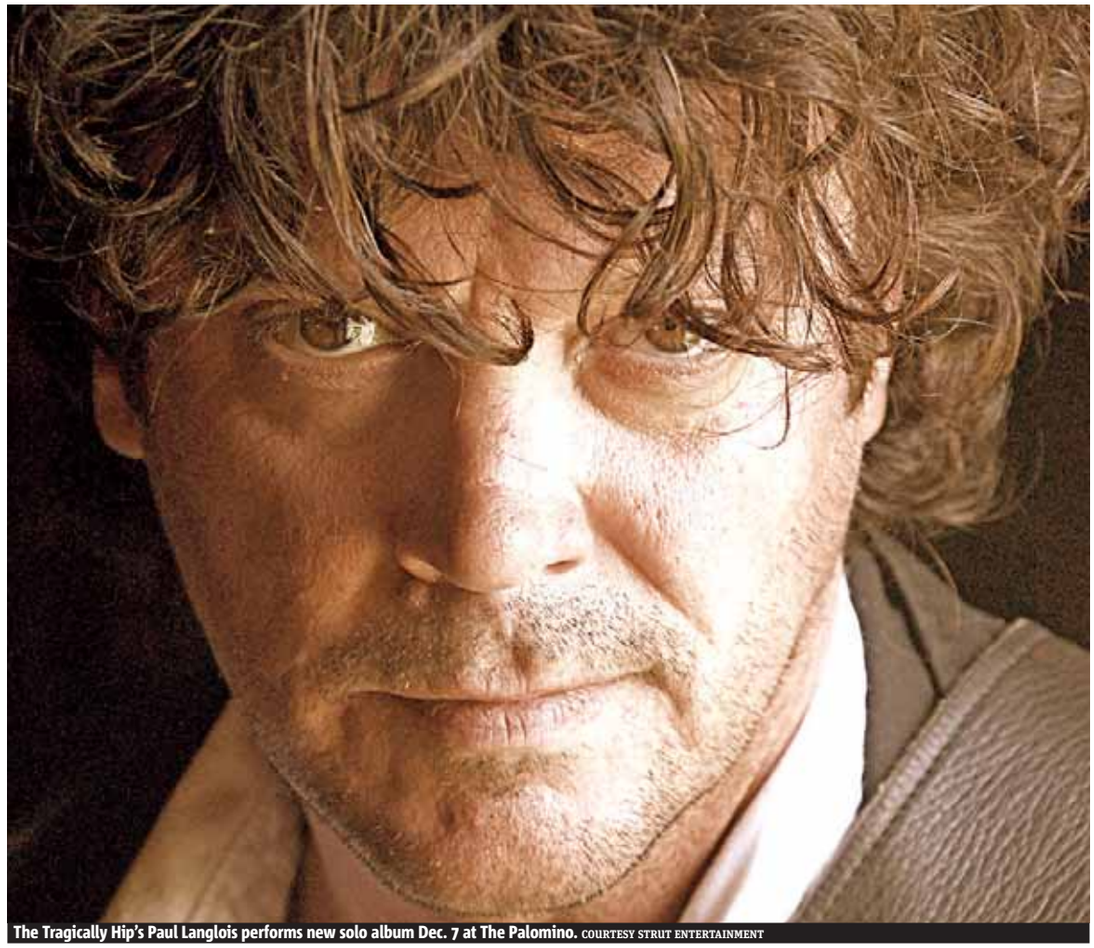

The Tragically Hip's Paul Langlois performs new solo album Dec. 7 at The Palomino. COURTESY STRUT ENTERTAINMENT

Paul Langlois' claim to fame has been as the guitar player for The Tragically Hip, but the performer is starting a new chapter in his musical career.

Langlois has branched out, started his own label, and released his sophomore solo album Not Guilty on November 5. "I saw this window of opportunity because The Hip just finished, so I knew if I was going to do a tour, I needed to do it now. I recorded through the summer (last year) with this in mind," he explains.

Despite nearly 30 years of being on stage and all his experience with one of Canada's most beloved bands, Langlois admits the process of creating his own work hasn't been easy.

"I never really tried to sing on my own let alone my own songs. Within the Hip framework, which we did for over 30 years, I played guitar and Gord was the frontman.

"I was comfortable on stage doing my thing but not really being part of it, so it's quite different being up there singing my words."

He admits, "It was pretty slow process for me. My first record, I was uncomfortable and was like 'yeech' this is a lot of me. But then I did a couple shows and it was fine.

"I got a band together that was really enthusiastic, had really great feedback from family and friends, so it's been gradual."

Having said that, Langlois says he still puts pressure on himself to please the fans.

"I think there will be some nerves and pressure because it's club," says Langlois who goes onto explain the intimate setting can be more intimidating than a large stage in an arena.

"I just hope the fans take away the fun and pick up on the excitement."

For the second solo album, Langlois branched out and collaborated with the talents of Jeff Montgomery, Mauro Sepe, and The Hip's Rob Baker.

"Recording this album with a band turned out to be a lot more fun," he says.

Details

Langlois and company take the stage Saturday December 7 at The Palomino, 109 7th Avenue SW.

- Tickets are $15 in advance.
- Greg Ball and Pete Murray open the show.
- Langlois' label is called Ching Music.

SCENE

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Kate Bosworth takes on challenge of playing drug-addicted mom

Stripped down. In Homefront, Bosworth wanted to show vulnerability, not just a villain

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Kate Bosworth wasn't going to take the easy route in approaching her character for Homefront. She co-stars as a meth-addicted mom who sets her loose-cannon brother (James Franco) after Jason Statham's retired DEA agent after their kids get into a schoolyard brawl.

On a happier note, Bosworth got hitched this summer to filmmaker Michael Polish, and she couldn't be more satisfied with their home life.

The last time we spoke, we talked a lot about working as a producer as well as an actress to get projects going. How has that been going?
Well, I produced a wedding (laughs). Joking aside, I mean my life changed when I met my husband because he's a filmmaker, so our life is a constant production of films, and he also shoots a lot of my campaigns involved with the fashion side of things that I design. He sees the product that I've designed and he thinks about what that campaign will look like and what the films will look like for it. So it's a continual creative household. When you have your partner, it's a fast track to things.

In Homefront, you're playing a fairly complex character who's actually a fully rounded human being, which you don't see a lot in action fare.
That was the challenge. I get asked a lot if the challenge was the physicality, and I didn't think twice about portraying someone and being truthful to how she would look. That strip-down was something that was required by the character and how she behaves and the abuse that she does to herself. The challenge for me was to maintain her dignity throughout the movie and not strip her of it even when she's unsympathetic and selfish and has terrible behaviour. I know James kind of approached his "villain" character similarly in that when we were standing in front of each other it wasn't "the villain and the drug addict," it was a sister and a brother. There's that vulnerability that was really important to both of us for the characters, even though they do despicable things.

Kate Bosworth as Cassie Klum and James Franco as Gator in Homefront. COURTESY MCT

Well, she is a drug addict.
Sure, but there's an easy pitfall to say, "She's a drug addict, oh well." There's this kind of face value that you can easily fall into. The challenge was to make sure that the human side to her was present at all times as well as the drugs.

You have that great moment when she realizes the enormity of the events she's set in motion. It starts off almost like a PTA squabble.
Of course (laughs). I figured that she comes in there every Monday with a problem. She's an exposed nerve, so anything that rubs up against her — depending on how much she's been using and how much she has left — it's going to effect her behaviour with people, and it normally would be explosive. Unless she's with her brother. Her brother and her kid are the two people that I thought that she quiets down with.

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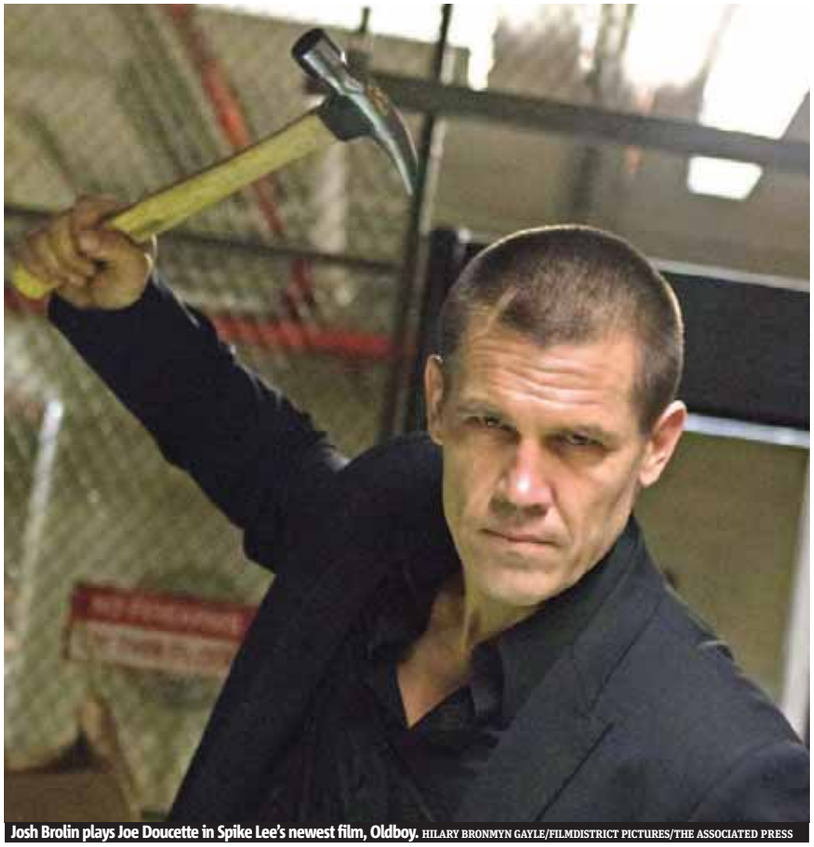

Josh Brolin plays Joe Doucette in Spike Lee's newest film, Oldboy. HILARY BRONMYN GAYLE/FILMDISTRICT PICTURES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brolin's a tough guy on and off the screen

Gulp. Oldboy star gained 28 pounds in 10 days, then lost it all again for role in gritty thriller

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

The catering staff at the press junket for Spike Lee's update on Oldboy has laid out a spread almost entirely made up of different kinds of dumplings, and Josh Brolin does not think that's very funny. (The dish is featured prominently in the film as one of the only things Brolin's character is allowed to eat during his mysterious 20-year imprisonment.) "I ate, I'd say, probably 200 dumplings or something like that," he says.

Oldboy asked a lot of Brolin's body in that his character goes from a bloated alcoholic to a lean and mean tool of vengeance after his imprisonment. Of course, he didn't have 20 years to pull off the transition. "It was more about water retention, so I gained 28 pounds in 10 days, and then I lost 22 pounds in two and a half days. And then going through that and all the cramps of that, I was rehearsing the fight at the same time, which was not smart. So I pulled a lot of muscles and stuff that I'm still dealing with now."

That fight he's talking about is quite a doozy, an update on the original Korean film's single-take tracking shot of the film's hero taking out an army of goons with just his bare hands and a carefully deployed hammer. So obviously for the remake they had to up the ante a bit.

"That was five weeks of prep, and it was difficult, to say the least," Brolin says. "The fight, I think, is at least three times longer than the original fight. I was having a really tough time in the beginning, and then I panicked. And then I started working out a lot — like two hours in the morning and two hours at night between 12-hour days. So I wasn't sleeping a lot, which I think lent to the movie, too, because I was more emotional, I was more on edge, I felt more exposed, vulnerable, whatever."

That level of self-abuse paid off, apparently. "We did it in seven takes, and the seventh take was the one," he remembers. "I walked away after that and had a little moment to myself, had some tears and was just happy that a 45-year-old dude was able to pull that off. It was a geriatric moment that I had."

Worth the pain?

"I'll never do it again because it killed my body."

Josh Brolin
On losing weight while training for fight scenes in Oldboy

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J.J. Abrams: Director, producer and novelist?

Jack of all trades.
Director's first novel, S., is more than just your typical book

EMILY LAURENCE
Metro World News

When J.J. Abrams conceived the idea for S., he knew there was only one way to tell the story — and it wasn't on-screen. There would be no special effects or big-name actors. Abrams felt that the only medium that would work was a good old-fashioned book.

"It all started in LAX when J.J. found a paperback book," co-author Doug Dorst tells Metro. "Someone had written a note to whoever was going to find it." The note got the gears in Abrams' brain turning, and he came up with the idea of telling a story within a story.

S. is not your average book. The pages look old and worn, with scribbles all over the margins. There are inserts of photos, postcards and letters tucked into the pages. It's presented as a novel called Ship of Theseus written by V.M. Straka. But the notes and inserts tell another story, between a female college senior and a male graduate student who pass the book back and forth, leaving notes to each other.

Since writing a novel is a bit different from writing a script and Abrams was, you know, busy, he enlisted the help of acclaimed writer Dorst. "We spent the better part of a year talking about the characters, why they would pass the book back and forth to each other and the context of the notes," Dorst says. "Abrams told me, 'Go, run with it.'" Dorst would pass each chapter off to Abrams, who would then weigh in.

Telling two parallel stories with all the extras was no easy task. "There's a ridiculous amount of detail in the book," he says. "I didn't actually have a great system of keeping track of it. It was a lot of scribbled notes and keeping a lot of it in my head, which is not the most efficient way to work."

Despite not having everything figured out, Abrams and Dorst were on the same page (metaphorically speaking) the entire time. Though Abrams is familiar with screenwriting, where everything is mapped out beforehand, he adapted to the novel-writing process, letting the story unfold as it was being written.

So, are Abrams and Dorst hoping their book will inspire people to forgo their Kindles and go back to buying hardbacks? "I just want people to read!" Dorst laments. "I don't think one form has to win out over the other."

J.J. Abrams' new novel S. tells two parallel stories at once. GETTY IMAGES

While my guitar gently weeps: Book shows off rock 'n' roll's tear-jerkers

Call her Baby. 108 Rock Star Guitars book celebrates beloved instruments and their battle-axe beauty

Sometimes, a picture is worth a thousand songs.

The supersized book 108 Rock Star Guitars (Glitterati Inc.) demonstrates that six-stringed instruments owned by celebrities and virtuoso sidemen can look as good as they rock. The 17-year undertaking by photographer Lisa S. Johnson partly benefits the Les Paul Foundation. Paul, the Rock Hall musician-inventor, wrote the foreword before he died.

Not a guitar geek? Don't fret.

Whether you define "pickup" as a truck, a dating technique or a guitar part, you can revel in the glitz-and-grit world where these prized possessions reside. The instruments (one's named Baby) evoke tender talk from macho musicians. But some of these battle-axe beauties have seen more action than a roller derby queen: They bear the gashes and sweat stains to prove it.

The author, who grew up in a musical family, underscores musicians' emotional attachment to their instruments.

Steve Vai, who went solo after playing with Frank Zappa's band, once described his guitar as "the voice of my heart" in moments of depression, euphoria and "divine love. ... I have cried, screamed, prayed and bled through that instrument."

The book lauds the instrument-makers, called luthiers, and the techs, along with the guitars.

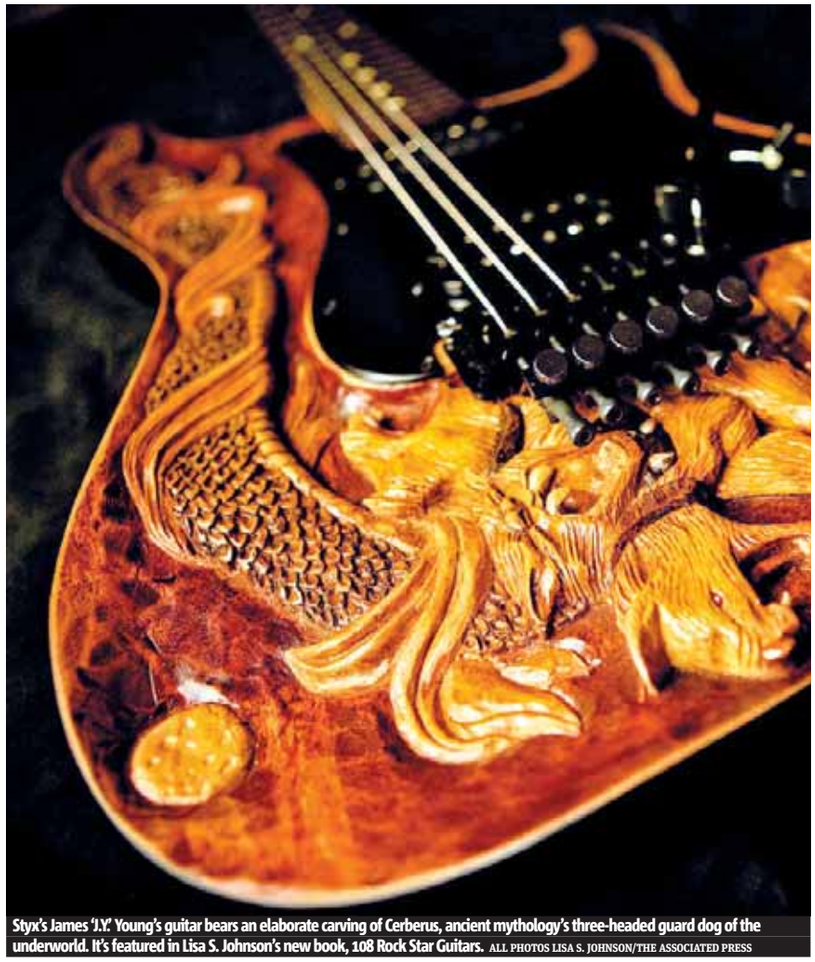
Pawnshop wallflowers blossom into unbridled stardom. There are kaleidoscopic, patriotic and wildcat patterns; gorgeous maple and mahogany; and delicate carvings of leaves and acorns.

Some seem to revel in musical masochism, like Slash of Guns N' Roses' cigarette carelessness. As the story goes, the guitarist was "one with the music" while accidentally inflicting a "charred reminder of rock 'n' roll nirvana" on his guitar.

John Rzeznik (Goo Goo Dolls) resurrected a broken Stratocaster into a 4-string. The word "OUCH!" is splayed over its torso; it's now named Halfcaster.

"I was amazed when I threw the guitar in the air and the top portion split right off," Rzeznik recalled via email. "I had my guitar tech take it to a luthier in L.A. who sanded off the rough edges and fixed the electronics.

"I used it on a song called Big Machine for a couple years after that. Surprisingly, the tone didn't really change; it was a cheap guitar that didn't sound that great to begin with. Ha ha!"



Styx's James 'J.Y.' Young's guitar bears an elaborate carving of Cerberus, ancient mythology's three-headed guard dog of the underworld. It's featured in Lisa S. Johnson's new book, 108 Rock Star Guitars. ALL PHOTOS LISA S. JOHNSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The appreciation of instruments as visual art is an age-old concept. They "may evoke status, identity, or indicate events — sacred or profane," comments J. Kenneth Moore, the Frederick P. Rose curator in charge of the Department of Musical Instruments at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. "They become sounding, tangible works of art — telling many stories of the life and times of those who used them," he said.

A double-neck owned by Cheap Trick's Rick Nielsen has a quirky folk art feel. Its two-pronged top forms the legs of Nielsen's upside-down caricature. The figure, named Uncle Dick, displays a thumbs-up, but his expression looks maniacal.

When his Mom made young Nils Lofgren a Nehru jacket and bell-bottom pants out of drapes, he proudly stuck leftover fabric on his guitar so it matched his new suit.

The book also features a famous, battered Fender Esquire owned by Lofgren's boss, Bruce Springsteen.

Willie Nelson's Trigger, named for movie-cowboy Roy Rogers' horse, bears dozens of autographs, in including Leon Russell, Roger Miller, Kris Kristofferson, Gene Autry, Waylon Jennings and Johnny Cash. Trigger's top is worn clear through; Nelson chooses to leave it that way. "The two of them," notes the book, "continue to mature together." Life partners in perfect harmony.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ticket to rock 'n' roll heaven

Activist-musician Tom Morello (Rage Against the Machine) scrawled jarring jargon over drawings of happy hippos on his axe.

Willie Nelson's guitar, Trigger, has a hole worn through it, and is inscribed with dozens of autographs.

ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons' guitar is covered with fake fur.

John Rzeznik of the Goo Goo Dolls resurrected a broken Stratocaster into a 4-string, named Halfcaster

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Alec Baldwin

Baldwin loses his talk show but is still 'half' defiant over anti-gay slurs

Alec Baldwin has lost his talk show, which was officially cancelled by MSNBC in the wake of multiple controversies involving the former 30 Rock star, but Baldwin is still looking to set the record straight about what he may or may not have said to a photographer when he used an anti-gay slur. "I dispute half the comment I made," Baldwin tells the website Gothamist. "'F—t' is not the word that came out of my mouth. That I know. But you've got the fundamentalist wing of gay advocacy — (GLAAD communications VP) Rich Ferraro and (blogger) Andrew Sullivan — they're out there, they've got you. Rich Ferraro, this is probably one of his greatest triumphs. They killed my show. And I have to take some responsibility for that myself."

Jennifer Love Hewitt

Hewitt's baby-marriage double kept on down low

Jennifer Love Hewitt likes to keep things quiet. The former Ghost Whisperer star gave birth to a daughter, Autumn James Hallisay, on Tuesday, and her rep used the birth announcement to sneak in the fact that Hewitt has also quietly married fiancé Brian Hallisay. "Jennifer Love Hewitt and her husband, Brian Hallisay, are thrilled to announce the birth of their daughter," her rep tells Us Weekly.

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Thanksgiving holiday conversations: The celebrity version

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

What do the rich and famous do over the American Thanksgiving break? I have a feeling they are doing something fabulous and not doing what we do — hanging out in the townie bars in our hometown drinking cheap domestics with people from high school.

However, what if they did? For this special edition of The Word, Metro staffers imagined what kind of discussions the rich and famous have at their hometown hangs.

"Oh ... Kelly and Michelle ... Hi! Um, how long have you guys been bartending here?" **— Beyoncé**

"So, do you text?" **— Anthony Weiner**

"I don't know, y'all. Have I made enough of a statement this year that I am finally a woman?" **— Miley Cyrus**

"Guys, I know it's not like me to walk away from a fight, but if I get nabbed one more time for beating somebody up, I'll go away for a long time. Now, let's just chill, get another pitcher of Miller Lite and play some Keno." **— Chris Brown**

"Oh man, bro, last time I saw you, we were, what, in middle school? Can't believe it's been five years!" **— Justin Bieber**

"Wait, what?! You prefer the dark meat? Oh, hell no! Bartender, keep the White Russians comin' sugar ... " **— Paula Deen**

Frankie Muniz ALL IMAGES GETTY

Frightened Muniz suffers another mini-stroke

At 27 years old, Frankie Muniz isn't having the best time, health-wise. "Almost a year to the day, I experienced another mini-stroke," Muniz posted to Twitter. "Hopefully that will be the last. Miserable." A mini-stroke consists of tiny lapses in blood flow to the brain.

Last year he related to Good Morning America how frightening the experience can be: "I couldn't say any words," he said. "I thought I was saying them. My fiancée was looking at me as if I was speaking a foreign language."

Twitter

@justinbieber
Surfing and sunshine. Loving the Gold Coast.

@lenadunham
Secret of human existence: I totally think I'm the worst, just for different reasons than you do

@SarahKSilverman
It's all meaningless but don't let yourself get hung up on that

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

One for under the tree, and another one for me

'Tis the season to save on style. Self-shopping becoming less of a secret shame as fashionistas embrace this optimal time to buy their beauty booty

Getting up early on Black Friday for a little shopping? Doing your part on Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday, too? It's all in the name of gift-giving — or at least the guise of it.

It seems a lot of consumers are using these sales and retail events to treat themselves to a little something new.

As a group, self-shoppers are growing, says Marshal Cohen, chief analyst of The NPD Group, Inc., a consumer insight company. He puts the number at 20 per cent, up from five per cent in the early 2000s.

"I started tracking people shopping for themselves about 10 years ago. I was at a Black Friday in a Macy's in a suburban location in Long Island," he recalls. "This woman has one arm filled with a few things, maybe a dress and a few sweaters, and another with 12 items."

Guess which hand had the future presents for her two sisters and a friend?

It's a similar scene in Loft stores already this year, says Lori Leslie-Robbins, director of client experience for the retailer. "For us, the telltale sign that someone is shopping for themselves is that our fitting rooms stay busy for the holidays. She's trying clothes on, and you don't need to do that for a gift."

Leslie-Robbins overheard this past weekend a conversation between a sales associate and customer in the dressing room that went something like this: The shopper was in the dressing room choosing between a dress and a tuxedo-jacket-and-denim-jeans combo, and was taking seriously this choice of what to wear to a co-worker's at-home holiday party. When the associate asked if she'd also considered a hostess gift, the response was, "I'm not there yet."

We're certain Santa would encourage doing something nice for yourself this yuletide. ISTOCK

Because of the deep discounts, shoppers see this as an opportunity to replenish their own wardrobes and homes with less guilt than buying the new pair of jeans, for example, at full price, Cohen says. Those same shoppers might not feel that way about a gift for someone else.

He says especially the early-bird holiday shoppers are looking for the sales for themselves, while the transactions made closer to Christmas are more likely to be bona fide gifts. He can also tell by what you're buying: If it's electronics or footwear, it's probably for you; fragrance is a go-to gift item, with 20 per cent of annual sales happening in the five days before Christmas, according to NPD.

Rachel DiCarlo is a fan of the one-for-me, one-for-you theory. Jewellery and scarves, perfectly good gifts for others, are also the items she tends to buy for herself.

Last year, she couldn't resist the initial necklaces she was buying for so many others. "I was getting the Ls, the Js, and I thought, 'I should buy an R.'"

She is the vice-president of public relations at American Eagle Outfitters and, in her office, everyone tends to dress similarly.

So, she says with a laugh, it makes sense to get for herself the shirt or accessory she is getting for the members in her team — although, everyone gets a different colour.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

You deserve a good deal

Many of the self-purchases Loft's Leslie-Robbins sees in stores are those that solve problems or have a focused end use — this tends to alleviate that pang of guilt, she says.

- A woman needs to buy herself the items no one else will buy her, right? muses Robin White, global press director of beauty brand Philosophy. There's also "the stuff you need" and "the stuff you enjoy buying."
- She takes pleasure, for example, in a new tube of eye cream — it really makes her day, she says, but it's not quite what she'd want to unwrap Christmas morning. That makes it the perfect self-purchase.

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Tartan it up for the holidays

Plaid is one of the most popular patterns during the festive season — the clean lines look great in both modern and traditional interiors, and they're a perfect way to add variety to a room with solid colours (so long as you remember to never mix plaids together). From tabletop items to wallpapers, there's a wide array of accessories that bring a touch of the old clan to your home.

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Add some old-school style to your work commute. Plaid Lunch Box and Thermal Carafe, $40 each, crateandbarrel.com.

Subtle grey plaid adds modern sophistication to walls. Audrey Charcoal Wallpaper, $85 per roll, grahambrown.ca.

Stay warm during those cold nights. Nordic Plaid Duvet Cover Set, $75, simons.ca.

Punchy colours modernize the season's favorite pattern. Lord & Taylor Buffalo Plaid Duvet Cover, $69-89, thebay.com.

Drive in style while keeping your hands toasty. Plaid Steering Wheel Cover, $15, canadiantire.ca.

Scotch and soda never went down so easy. PC Tartan Glasses, four for $9, Real Canadian Superstore.

Add bright colours underfoot. Modern Plaid 5x8 foot Wool Rug, $450, cb2.com

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Lemon Walnut Bars usher in the holiday baking season

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F.

2. In a small saucepan over low heat, melt the butter (or melt in the microwave for about 30 seconds on high).

3. In a large bowl, combine the oats, flour, sugar, coconut, ground walnuts and baking powder. Pour in the melted butter and mix with a spatula or large spoon until the butter is evenly distributed. Press half the oat mixture into the prepared pan firmly and evenly.

4. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the condensed milk and lemon juice until fully combined and slightly thickened. Pour the lemon mixture over the base. Use the back of a spoon or a small offset spatula to spread the filling evenly across the base. Sprinkle the remaining half of the oat mixture over the filling.

5. Bake in the preheated oven for 22 to 25 minutes or until the top is a golden brown.

This recipe makes 16 bars. PHOTOS JANIS NICOLAY

6. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely in the pan.

7. Run a small knife along the two edges of the pan that do not have parchment handles. Carefully remove the slabs from the pan and cut into approximately 2- x 2-inch bars. Make sure to use at least a 10-inch knife to avoid cutting and dragging the knife across the bars. RECIPE EXCERPTED FROM BUTTER BAKED GOODS. COPYRIGHT © 2013 ROSIE DAYKIN. PUBLISHED BY APPETITE BY RANDOM HOUSE, WHICH IS A DIVISION OF RANDOM HOUSE OF CANADA LIMITED. REPRODUCED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE PUBLISHER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup large-flake rolled oats
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup dark brown sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1/2 cup ground walnuts
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 300 ml can condensed milk (about 1 1/4 cups)
- 1/2 cup lemon juice, freshly squeezed (about 2 lemons)

You Will Need

- (9- x 9-inch) pan buttered and lined with parchment paper

Cookbook of the Week

Get to sifting

Before it was a book filled with 100 recipes, Butter Baked Goods was (and still is) a tiny bakery in Vancouver.

Opened by the author of the book, Rosie Daykin, it is known as the home of the very best gourmet marshmallow in North America.

In Butter Baked Goods, Daykin shares homemade treats and childhood favourites through instructions that are easy to follow.

Among the delicacies in the book are: Butter's Chocolate Cake, Red Velvet Cupcakes, Peanut Butter Balls, The Nanaimo Bar, Butter's Vanilla Cupcakes, and more. METRO

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The deals are just delightful

What happens when Black Friday becomes the new Boxing Day? More deals? Maybe. More crowds? Perhaps. More drama? Is there ever too much? Metro has your guide to survive not only this Friday, but also the online shopping spree that is Cyber Monday.

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Expert offers no-bull tactics to scoring best Black Friday deals

Run, bargain hunter, run. If you are brave enough to participate in a crush of crazy shoppers this Friday, you need some tips

MAJA LUNDAGER
Metro World News in New York

Braving Black Friday crowds this year? You need survival skills! ISTOCK

If you look up Black Friday on YouTube, you're bound to find a lot of videos with terrible titles like Black Friday Fights, Black Friday Disasters or Black Friday 2012 Madness. But the horrifying stigma of this day doesn't seem to scare the thousands of brave shoppers who voluntarily run with the big box store crowd, fighting for killer deals on last year's food processor.

As with all other extreme sports, you need to prepare for Black Friday shopping. We went to the best: Mark Hellmann Regouby.

Is Regouby an experienced Black Friday shopper? Not really. But he'll do you one better. He's the founder of the travel company Running of the Bulls, Inc., which puts tourists up close and personal with the animals at the annual event in Pamplona, Spain. Here's his advice for braving big crowds.

Before you go in

"We tell them … watch the Bull Run first so they can see how it works and understand the flow of the people and the bulls and make their strategy from overviewed conditions," he says. This is where the aforementioned YouTube search for Black Friday videos will come in handy. But the preparation doesn't stop here. If you were planning to hit the bottle to take the edge off of Black Friday shopping, you'd better think twice. "The No. 1 rule is to arrive sober," Regouby says. "No. 2 is to get a good night's sleep. No. 3 is to have 360-degree awareness. Always try to be aware of who is in front, behind and beside you. Really get a sense of being in the place."

Surviving in the heat of battle

"The best runners always say you stake out your territory," says Regouby. "You use your arms and don't let anybody get too much in your way. Swing your arms and keep in your elbows to make sure you've got your own space that you need in order to run without tripping."

This sounds extreme, but seriously, do you want that food processor or not?

If you go down

There have only been 15 deaths since the beginning of the Bull Run in Pamplona in 1910, but broken wrists and bloodied chins are the norm. According to Regouby, there are more falls and injuries because of humans tripping over each other than because of the bulls. We can, with some certainty, say the same about Black Friday, except that the National Retail Federation in the U.S. — the homeland of Black Friday — has only reported one trampling death: In 2008 a Walmart employee was crushed in a stampede. So what do you do if you go down?

"The most important rule of all is if you go down, stay down. The bulls are actually talented at stepping over obstacles and as long as you cover your head and stay down and don't move, they can plan to step over you."

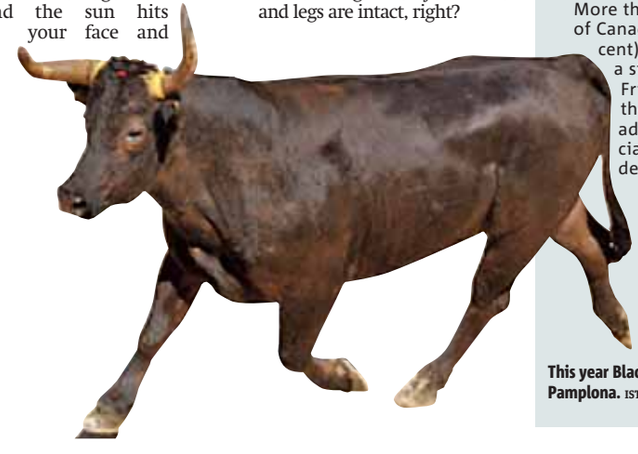
We can only hope the same counts for the herds at Best Buy and Target. Actually, we're going to say that the people waiting in the cold to buy stuff at discount prices are NOT talented at stepping over obstacles, so we advise just trying to roll to safety!

When you succeed

Regouby says that a run like the one in Pamplona is for people who want to be in touch with their own mortality and live their lives to the fullest.

"I have [run with the bulls] four times and it's still pretty incredible," he says. "You arrive in this huge arena and the sun hits your face and the air is fresh again, and you can't believe you are alive."

That sounds a bit like waking up way too early on Black Friday and shortly afterward hauling bags of discounted goods to the parking lot, realizing all of your arms and legs are intact, right?



This year Black Friday. Next? Pamplona. ISTOCK

Canadian context

While Black Friday is a relatively new shopping event in Canada, the day's quick rise in popularity among Canadians is having an impact on Canuck retailers' holiday sales strategy. Consulting firm Accenture recently released the results of a survey into the habits of Canadians when it comes to Black Friday. Here are some findings:

- **Hungry for the best deals.** Almost two thirds of Canadians surveyed plan to shop at U.S. retailers, online or in-store, on Black Friday and throughout the holiday season.
- **Boxing Day.** Is still believed by many (44 per cent) to offer the best deals of the season in Canada, Canadians feel retailers in Canada are not doing enough to compete with U.S. stores on Black Friday.
- **Go south.** When Canadians surveyed were asked when they believed they would see the best deals of the holiday season (either in Canada or the U.S.), Black Friday in the U.S. was cited by almost half (42 per cent), while less than a quarter (23 per cent) said the best deals were to be had on Black Friday in Canada.
- **Bust down the door.** More than a quarter of Canadians (27 per cent) would shop in a store on Black Friday because they want to take advantage of special door buster deals.

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After shopping, it's a wrap!

Odd-shaped gift

Booze, lotions and bubble bath are all popular gifts, but they're also round. Instead of trying to wrap it into a hot mess, try this creative solution.

What you need:
- Two pieces of coloured tissue
- Clear plastic bag
- Three pieces of coloured ribbon

How to do it:
Place two pieces of the same coloured tissue on top of two others, creating a T-shape. Lay the gift down in the middle of the tissue. Fold the bottom of the tissue upwards and then the sides over, creating a cone around the gift. Place the cone in a plastic bag and tie the ribbon just above the top of the gift. Curl the ribbon with scissors and adjust the excess paper "poof" on top. Ribbon curling tip: Look to see how the ribbon curls naturally, and drag the scissor blade down the same side to get a tight curl effect.

With these simple tricks, you'll be smiling instead of swearing at wrapping time. ISTOCK

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*Offers valid on Friday, November 29, 2013. While supplies last. No rain checks. Selection may vary by store. Offer valid in-store only. Not valid on previous purchases. See store for details. VÄRMDÖ rocking chair offer available in red only. EXPEDIT shelving unit offer available in black-brown, birch, and white, W79×H149cm only. LACK side table offer available in birch, black-brown, black and white only. Boxes and accessories sold separately. © Inter IKEA Systems B.V. 2013.

Not all gifts come in the shape of a box that's easy to wrap. Let's face it, even boxes are hard. Ever wonder how Aunt Doris gets her corners so crisp? Not sure how to wrap an awkward-shaped present? Elana White, owner of Toronto gift shop Outer Layer, shares four novel ways to wrap yours up this holiday season.

MAE BOWRING
Metro News Canada

Traditional box

Board games, shoeboxes — you're laughing because you think this wrapping job will be a cinch. But it's not. Where people go wrong, White says, is having too much wrapping paper.

What you need:
- Holiday wrapping paper
- Scissors
- Clear tape

How to do it:
After taping the paper together length-wise, tackle the sides. The wrapping paper should only come halfway up the gift width-wise, White explains. Ready for the secret trick? Fold the top of the paper all the way down, enforcing a crease on either side. That should make it easier to tuck in the sides, followed by the bottom. From there you need one small piece of tape to hold it together. Repeat on the other side.

Bag it

Have a bunch of small items that will fit into a gift bag? Bags are great but people tend to go overboard with tissue paper trying to make it look pretty, says White.

What you need:
- One festive bag
- Four pieces of coloured tissue, two different colours
- Coloured ribbon

How to do it:
Put gift inside the bag. Make a T-shape with the two colours of tissue and put the brighter coloured tissue on top. Pinch the middle of the tissue and give it a shake upside down. It will create a nice V-shaped "poof" that will fill up one side of the bag. Repeat and place the second "poof" on the other side of the bag. The trick, White says, is doing more with less. "We always train new people on how to do the poof." Tie bag handles shut with ribbon and gently curl it so that the ribbon cascades down the side of the bag.

Basket

If your gift has a theme that's too pretty to hide, a basket is another option.

What you need:
- A basket
- Newspaper
- Colourful shredded paper
- Roll of clear cellophane
- Ribbon

How to do it:
Fill the bottom of the basket with newspaper and place the shredded paper on top. This will prevent the items from falling into the basket and out of sight. Place each item on top of the shredded paper at an angle, starting from the back to the front. Cover the basket in cellophane and tie it together with ribbon toward the back of the basket. Cut excess cellophane away and gently curl ribbon.

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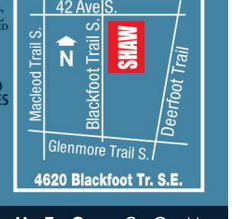

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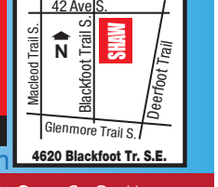

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Shop small. Don't forget the little guys on Friday

Sometimes small businesses can disappear in the crowd of big players. But there are more than 1.1 million small businesses in Canada, according to government statistics.

In the wake of Black Friday, Yellow Pages Group has launched a Shop the Neighbourhood campaign (shoptheneighbourhood.ca/) to get people to buy locally in Ontario on Saturday.

By the numbers

- 55.1 per cent of small businesses have only one to four employees
- Small businesses created 77.7 per cent of all private jobs from 2002 to 2012.

SOURCE: INDUSTRY CANADA/METRO

Try supporting your small, local businesses on this crazy shopping weekend. A lot of them are offering big discounts too! ISTOCK

The great gifting dilemma

A recent Match.com survey found most Canadians believe you should only give someone a holiday gift after dating for one to two months and you should spend between $25 and $50.

The survey also found younger Canadians are more likely to rush into gift-giving than older Canadians — singles between 18 to 34 years old wait only one to two months before picking out presents while singles over 65 wait at least six!

Match.com Canadian relationship insider Kimberly Moffit offers these tips:

METRO/ALL PHOTOS ISTOCK

Stage one: dating for less than one month? Spend between $25 and $50.

For him

A nice bottle of wine

For her

Aromatherapy candles

Stage two: dating for one to six months? Spend between $50 and $75

For him

A gentleman's shaving kit

For her

A small bottle of her favourite perfume

Stage three: dating for six months to over a year? Spend $75 to $100 — at least!

For him

Tickets to see his favourite sport team

For her

A day at the spa

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Take an additional 20% off your entire purchase, between 7AM-9AM Friday, November 29th ONLY. Not valid toward the purchase of Gift Cards.

Buyer be where — the best deals are on Black Friday

Shopping strategy. Only head out into the fray if you've got a game plan says expert shopper

EMILY LAURENCE
Metro World News in New York

The day after American Thanksgiving is the busiest shopping day of the year.

While it's a paid day off from work for some of our southern neighbours, there are Canadians who are also willing to drag themselves out of bed at the crack of dawn on a work day for a steal of a deal.

But is it really worth it?

"I don't think so," says Michelle Madhok, shopping expert and founder of SheFinds.com.

"You can get a lot of the same deals online, and there are also some deals you can only get online."

And you don't have to wait until Friday, or even Cyber Monday, to start scoring the best deals.

Madhok suggests using deal alert sites that tell you when the price drops on an item you want.

Prices are dropping now and will continue to do so the rest of the year up until after Christmas.

But if you do decide to brave the crowds, Madhok has some helpful tips to make it truly worth it.

Her first one is no surprise: Get your electronics first.

"The biggest Black Friday deals are on electronics, and getting 70 per cent off a TV is better than getting 70 per cent off, say, gloves," she says.

But buyer beware: Madhok says many retailers make lower quality products specifically for Black Friday.

To outsmart these sneaky stores, look up the model number to ensure what you're buying is the same model you want and not a knockoff.

Second, have a plan. Go to different websites to find store coupons and deals.

"It will help you make a game plan," Madhok says. "Then, head to the stores in advance so you know the layout."

Once you're in the store, use apps to scan your items to make sure you're getting the lowest price. If not, many stores match the price you find elsewhere.

Lastly, Madhok advises keeping your receipts, taking photos of them and uploading them to SkyDrive.com or Evernote.com so you can keep them on file.

"Ask for a price adjustment if you see the price on an item go down. Many stores will honour that," she says.

Most importantly, remember to keep your cool while you're out bargain hunting.

"Keep it in perspective," Madhok says.

"Don't let yourself get carried away with the mob [mentality]. It's not worth it."

First Black Friday stop? The electronics section! ISTOCK

Quoted

"The biggest Black Friday deals are on electronics and getting 70 per cent off a TV is better than getting 70 per cent off, say, gloves."

Shopping expert Michelle Madhok on Black Friday strategy

How we do Black Friday

According to the 2013 BMO Holiday Spending Outlook, nearly half of Canadian consumers are planning to shop this Black Friday, up 15 per cent from 2012. Those planning to make purchases on Black Friday this year expect to spend an average of $292. The survey was conducted by Pollara.

METRO

Skip the mall

Over half of Canadians say they are most likely to do it in the evening, while 21 per cent do it in the afternoon. Now before your mind descends too far into the gutter, we're talking about online shopping. Ebates.ca recently surveyed Canadians about their online shopping habits. It found that:

- **77 per cent.** Of Canadians say they have made a purchase from a website in the past year.
- **32 per cent.** Of Canadians report spending more online in the past twelve months than in previous years.
- **32 per cent.** Say they prefer shopping online as opposed to in-store, primarily because of online exclusive items and convenience.

METRO

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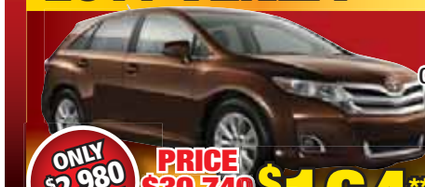

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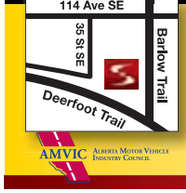

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Five tips that will ensure your shopping is stress free

Plan of attack. Do your research, set a budget, shop online and if you have to brave the mall — bring your best pal

MAE BOWRING
life@metronews.ca

If stores that look like they've barfed Christmas and crowded malls scare you, you're not alone. Fear not, weary shopper. Checking everyone off your 'nice' list — and enjoying it — is not impossible, says image consultant Christie Ressel, a shopping and fashion expert. Follow her top five tips for stress-free holiday shopping and you'll be singing Let It Snow all the way home.

Be a sleuth

The element of surprise can be lost during the holidays as shoppers try to get something — anything! — wrapped and under the tree. Instead of asking what someone wants and buying it, do a little bit of detective work, advises Ressel.

"We're so quick to get on with our lives that we miss the obvious," she says.

Pay close attention to what they say about their favourite hobby, TV show or website. They're probably dropping hints. Ressel once found a great gift idea for her husband by flipping through one of his magazines.

Have a plan

Once you have a gift list and you've checked it twice, set a strict budget for yourself, suggests Ressel.

You may have to be more creative or spend time on DIY gifts, but the stress you won't feel when January's credit card bill arrives will be worth the effort.

Overspending is one of the biggest holiday buzz kills, Ressel warns.

"It will make you crabby for the season and it's meant to be enjoyed."

Having a detailed gift list and budget will also make you laser-focused when you're out shopping. No more wandering around aimlessly!

Before you leave the house

With Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals getting better every year, Canadians are enjoying the ease of buying gifts from the comfort of their own home.

This is where the real fun comes in, says Ressel.

"I love online shopping. I'm not a fan of bumping shoulders with everybody."

It's easy to compare prices for electronics online and if you're really clever, you can call the store ahead of time to make sure the item is in stock. While Ressel believes Canadians can purchase a lot of their gifts online, she advises against buying trendy clothing online unless you know the exact size, quality and designer you're dealing with.

Make it jolly

It's time to brave the mall with the rest of your list, but there's no reason you have to do it alone. Grab a friend and arrive early to beat the crowds.

The checkout lines won't seem as long if you have someone to chat with and be sure to break up the marathon by grabbing lunch or a coffee.

Want to make sure your gifts stay a secret? Ressel suggests stashing them at a friend's house, and then having a wrapping party over a glass of eggnog closer to Christmas. The only ones who will be miffed on Christmas morning will be the ones who tried to snoop, jokes Ressel.

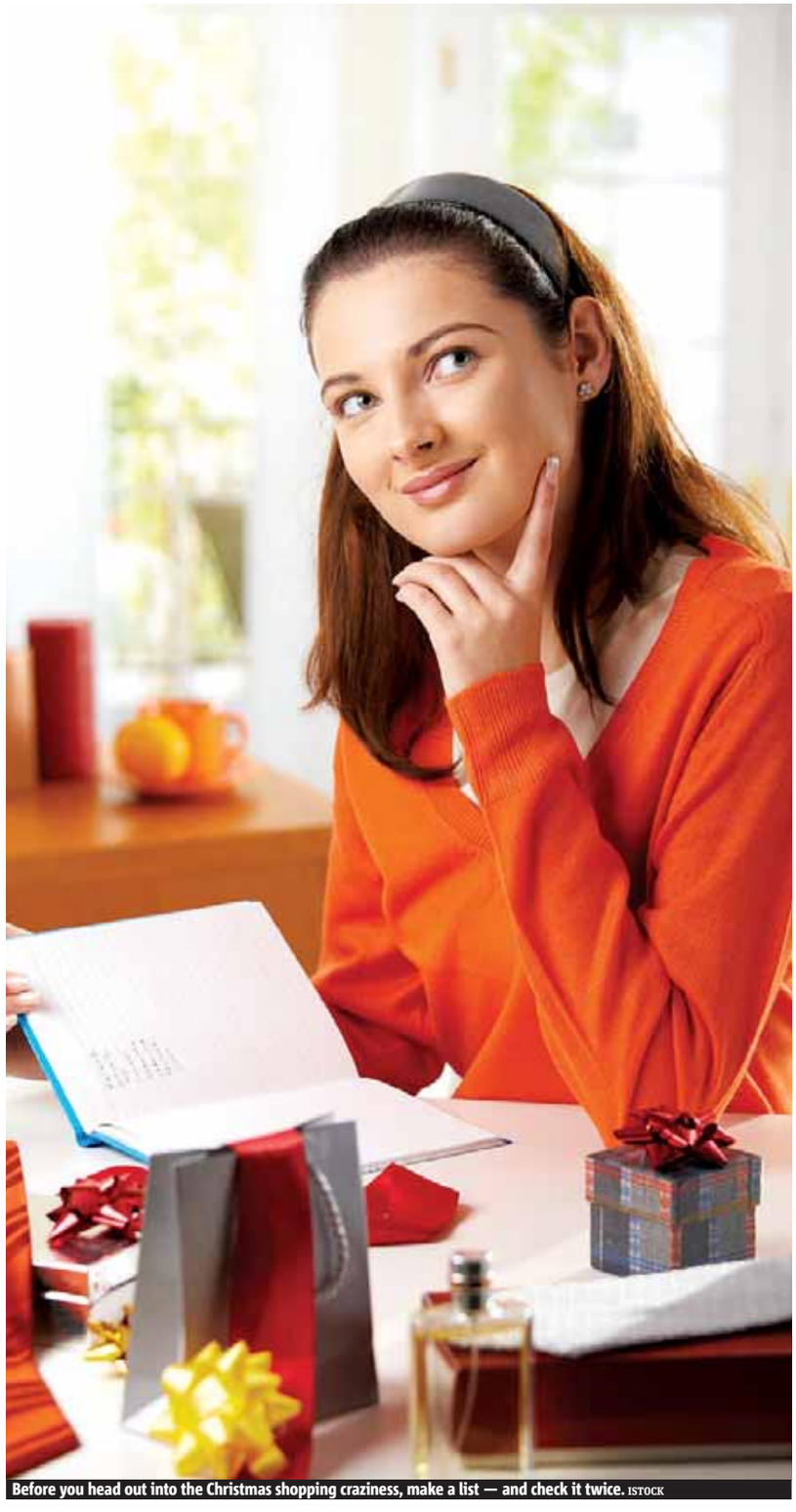
"Hopefully they weren't wanting what someone else got."

Be ready to return

Your holiday shopping plan was well executed and you have every reason to pat yourself on the back. If a loved one does need to return a gift, however, it's wise to be prepared, says Ressel.

Keep receipts handy by placing them in a bright-coloured folder in the kitchen or by the front door. That way you won't have to wrack your brain trying to remember if it's in your wallet or accidentally went out with the recycling.

If no one says anything by the end of January, it's safe to throw out the receipts, advises Ressel.



Before you head out into the Christmas shopping craziness, make a list — and check it twice. ISTOCK

Financial tips

Don't say bah-humbug to a budget

Worried about overspending this year on holiday shopping?

Here are some tips from Raymond Chun, senior vice president of TD Canada Trust, and Eileen Chadnick, certified coach and principal of Big Cheese Coaching, to help minimize stress and avoid overindulging.

Create a plan and start budgeting now

"Start by reviewing last year's debit and credit card statements to get a realistic idea of spending habits and, based on current finances, set a firm budget for this year's holiday spending, and break down the budget into specific categories, from gifts and decor to entertainment and travel, to make it easier to manage," said Chun. "Once your budget is set, divide that figure by the number of weeks until the holidays to determine how much to save each week to avoid post-holiday debt."

Shop early and track spending

"Shopping earlier in the season provides time to comparison shop and find the best deals online, and it lets you take advantage of seasonal sales and promotions that pop up, ultimately saving you money," said Chun. "You can also look at redeeming credit card rewards to buy gifts in order to save even more."

Watch for potential budget breakers and stay focused

"The holiday season can be hectic, and when we're tired and stressed our impulse control is compromised, which can lead to poor decision-making and indulgences we may later regret," said Chadnick. "To avoid post-holiday remorse, it's important to set boundaries in advance — for example, make sticking to your original gift-giving list easier by writing it out. With a little advance planning, you can manage the additional temptations that come with the holiday rush."

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I won't spend a cent until I see that sale sign

Shop when it drops. This year's holiday customers are wary of shelling out the cash without a compromise

This holiday season, shoppers may not spend their green unless they see more red.

Despite signs that the economy is improving, big store chains don't expect consumers to have much holiday shopping cheer unless they see bold, red signs that offer huge discounts. As a result, shoppers are seeing big sales events earlier and more often than in previous holiday seasons.

Retailers are trying to lure shoppers like Marissa Anwar, who has been doing more bargain hunting compared with last year.

Mall mania

"Stores know that they are well into a fight. The vast majority of consumers are distressed."

Ken Perkins
President of RetailMetrics

The operations consultant, who lives in Toronto and New York City, said the economy "hasn't been great" and she's lost clients. As a result, she cut her shopping budget to $2,800 from last year's $4,000.

"I was a former 'spendaholic,'" said Anwar, 29. "Now, I want to make sure I have the money before I spend it."

It's a problem that retailers know all too well. Since the recession began in late 2007, stores have had to offer financially-strapped customers ever bigger price cuts just to get them into stores. But those discounts eat away at profits.

So far, Wal-Mart, Target and Kohl's are among more than two dozen major chains that lowered their profit outlooks for either the quarter or the year. A big reason is the expectation that they'll have to offer huge discounts in order to get shoppers to spend.

Earlier discounting and lowered profit outlooks from retailers are becoming more frequent even though there are indications that the economy is recovering.

The job market is making strides. The housing market is starting to come back. And the stock market keeps hitting new highs. All that would ordinarily lead Americans to spend more.

But so far, those improvements haven't been enough to shore up consumer confidence. In fact, Americans' confidence in the economy is at its lowest level since April.

"Stores know that they are well into a fight," said Ken Perkins, president of the research firm RetailMetrics. "The vast majority of consumers are distressed."

Retailers say economic worries continue to weigh on shoppers heading into the holiday shopping season.

"We continue to see anxiety regarding the economy and the ability to stay within household budgets, particularly among lower- and middle-income consumers," said Kathee Tesija, executive vice-president of merchandising for Target, which trimmed its annual profit outlook last Thursday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

During the recession, retailers used sales to lure cash-strapped consumers into stores. The strategy has bred a group of deal junkies who won't shop unless they see a clearance sign. DAVID GOLDMAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Changes in store

There are already signs that retailers are aggressively discounting.

- Wal-Mart, for instance, last Friday started matching or beating the prices that certain competitors like Best Buy are advertising for some toys and electronics for the day after Thanksgiving — known as Black Friday. Best Buy also plans to match rivals' prices, even after customers have purchased items.
- And Target, better known for its whimsical advertising, is touting its prices in holiday TV ads for the first time in at least a decade.

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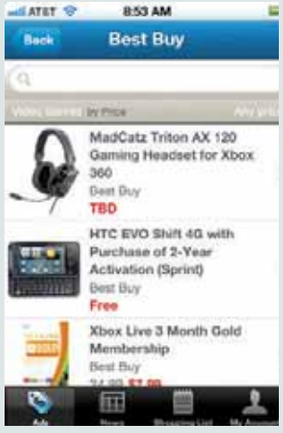
Want some tech support for that Black Friday shopping spree? We have a few apps to help you navigate those deals — or find a better one.

MATT PRIGGE
Metro World News in New York

5 Smart shopping apps

BFAds



For: iOS
Price: Free
Many shopping apps have sections focused exclusively on Black Friday. BFAds, as the acronym may suggest, is all about Black Friday. It rounds up the deals by store, keeps you abreast of news and allows you to compile a shopping list. Where some apps may dig up better deals while you're already out and about, BFAds allows you to make a game plan before you're stuck in traffic.

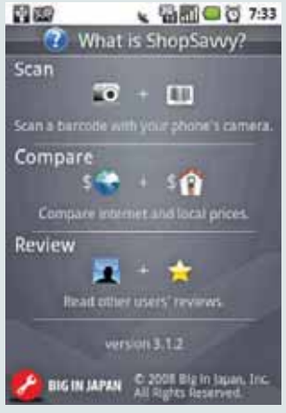
PoachIt

For: iOS
Price: Free
New to the shopping app wasteland, PoachIt allows you to search by scanning the barcode of an item to see if there's a better deal elsewhere. Or you can simply search by product. Looking for the best plasma TV? Just type that in and it will rank the best deals.

BuyVia

For: iOS
Price: Free
BuyVia starts with what you'd like to buy. Then it lets you pick the store. Then it finds you deals. It's a bit limited, handling mostly the big box chains. But if you'd like to keep things simple, with a guide who looks like Bill Gates, it will serve you well, helping to find the best price amid the gruesome rivalries waged between the major stores.

ShopSavvy



For: iOS
Price: Free
All of these apps pretty much perform the same function, with slightly different methods. ShopSavvy does the competitive sales hunting thing, too, but it adds another, perhaps unexpectedly useful aspect: social media. Connect with friends to see their lists, and not only steal their gift ideas but also their sales! We're all in this together, comrade, but shopping on Black Friday is also Darwinian, meaning we can grab the gift you wanted if you're stupidly trapped in an unmoving car pileup. It's survival of the fittest shopper, pal!

Shopular

For: iOS and Android
Price: Free
Once upon a time we were terrified of Big Brother one day knowing where we are. Now we find it convenient. When you walk into a store, Shopular buzzes you, telling you about the deals and feeding your coupons to the very place in which you presently stand. And it can be used the old-fashioned way, which is to say that you can search by store before you go. (See also: Zoomingo.)

The big travel deals land on Cyber Monday

On your way, online.
Log on to score big savings on trips

The travel industry is offering promotions large and small for Cyber Monday. Some companies are participating for the first time, while others are embracing the online holiday sale in a bigger way than in the past.

American Express Travel is launching its first-ever Cyber Monday promotion, with substantial hotel discounts and deals throughout the U.S. and Canada for Jan. 13-31.

The promotions will be bookable at amextravel.com beginning Monday (Dec. 2) at 12:01 a.m. and will last 72 hours.

Liberty Travel has participated in Cyber Monday before, but the volume of deals and their promotion is bigger this year and offers deeper savings.

Liberty has assembled 99 deals with up to 65 per cent off, bookable Black Friday through Cyber Monday (Nov. 29-Dec. 2), featuring resorts in the Caribbean and Mexico along with cruises and escorted tours.

Liberty is also giving a credit of up to $100 on all new bookings made in Liberty Travel stores Friday-Monday (Nov. 29-Dec. 2).

Get a Black Friday code at LibertyTravel.com, available as of 12 a.m. Friday (Nov. 29), then present it to an agent to take $50, $75 or $100 off (depending on how much you spend) on trips worth $2,500 or more.

Priceline.com is doing a one-day sale beginning at 12:01 a.m. Monday (Dec. 2) promising "50 per cent off flights for travel before Dec. 18" on select flights from unsold inventory.

Spokeswoman Leslie Cafferty says "there are a lot of options for those who are there first," advising dealseekers to "start searching early."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Big savings are shipping out on Cyber Monday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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DEMO

TOTAL SAVINGS $6,943

STK# 2130338 W/NAVI & MANUAL

2013 HONDA PILOT TOURING
NEW

TOTAL SAVINGS $6,630

STK# 2131139 AWD

2013 HONDA CR-V TOURING
DEMO

TOTAL SAVINGS $6,163

STK# 2130288

2013 HONDA ACCORD TOURING SEDAN
DEMO

TOTAL SAVINGS $4,680

STK# 2130095 4 CYL & AUTO

2013 HONDA CIVIC EX SEDAN
DEMO

TOTAL SAVINGS $4,547

STK# 2130479 AUTO

2013 HONDA CIVIC EX COUPE
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STK# 2130450 AUTO

2013 HONDA FIT SPORT
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TOTAL SAVINGS $3,152

STK# 2130008 AUTO

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Blackhawks snuff Flames with last-minute goal

Jonathan Toews of the Blackhawks attempts a wraparound on Flames goalie Reto Berra at the Scotiabank Saddledome on Wednesday night. Chicago overcame a two-goal deficit in the third period to win 3-2. The winning goal was scored by Patrick Kane with 18 seconds remaining in the game. It was his second goal of the game. Patrick Sharp also scored for the Blackhawks, while Matt Stajan and Sean Monahan tallied for the Flames. DEREK LEUNG/GETTY IMAGES

Over 200 ex-NHLers to join lawsuit: Lawyers

Concussions. Names not yet made public, but list of plaintiffs set to grow exponentially

The original concussion lawsuit against the NHL included 10 former players, and that number has already grown.

More than 200 players have joined, according to lawyers Steve Silverman and Mel Owens, who are at the forefront of the suit.

Owens, an NFL linebacker-turned-disability lawyer, said in a phone interview Wednesday that "hundreds" of ex-NHL players are going to become part of the suit, which was filed in U.S. federal court in Washington on Monday.

"These are 10 players, but there's hundreds of guys that, they're in the lawsuit," said Owens, who works for NBO Law in Beverly Hills, Calif.

A list of the 200-plus players was not made available when requested.

Sportsnet.ca was the first to report that more than 200 players joined the effort, which began with 10 players: Gary Leeman, Bradley Aitken, Darren Banks, Curt Bennett, Richard Dunn, Warren Holmes, Robert Manno, Blair James Stewart, Morris Titanic and Rick Vaive. Former New York Islanders centre Bob Bourne joined shortly after the suit was filed.

Leeman and Vaive in recent days have politely declined comment about their involvement, deferring to Silverman and Owens, who said he did not know how many players would wind up being a part of it.

"I don't know how many living alumni there are in the NHL that have these significant problems," Owens said. "I don't know that. But like in the NFL, it just matured over time. Once the players find out that 'Oh, there may be hope for me. I might be able to get some help and some treatment to address my quality-of-life issues,' I'm sure they'll be in contact."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"They just haven't been named yet. They're going to be there." Lawyer Mel Owens

Olympic hockey. IIHF moves roster deadline back

Steven Stamkos now has a bit more time to recover from a broken leg and prove he's ready for Olympic hockey. DIRK SHADD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The roster deadline for the 2014 Sochi Olympics has been pushed back to Jan. 7, the International Ice Hockey Federation announced.

Originally, national federations had until Dec. 31 to submit 25-man rosters for the tournament, which begins Feb. 12. Russia and other European countries were lobbying for a later date and got their wish.

Now teams have until noon Eastern on Jan. 7 to make their rosters official. That's a little extra time to take injuries into account, like Canada with Steven Stamkos's broken tibia.

The NHL and NHLPA agreed to compromise with the IIHF on the deadline after several countries pushed for it to be even later, according to a person with knowledge of the situation. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CFL

Esks hire defensive co-ordinator away from Argonauts

The Edmonton Eskimos have hired former Toronto Argonauts defensive co-ordinator Chris Jones as their new head coach.

Jones spent the last two seasons with the Argonauts and was the architect of the defence that helped them win the 2012 Grey Cup. He also served as the team's assistant head coach and assistant general manager.

"Chris Jones has paid his dues in the Canadian Football League and has earned this opportunity. His commitment to the league and record of success is impressive. I look forward to working with him," Eskimos general manager Ed Hervey said in a statement.

Jones replaces Kavis Reed, who was fired on Nov. 4 after Edmonton struggled to a 4-14 record last season.

Jones has been to the post-season in each of his 12 years in the league, with three Grey Cup victories in six appearances.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Leafs at Penguins

Malkin uncorks a pair on Bernier

Evgeni Malkin picked up his first two-goal game in more than 18 months and added the game-winner in the shootout and the Pittsburgh Penguins rallied past the Toronto Maple Leafs 6-5 on Wednesday night.

Chris Conner, Kris Letang and James Neal also scored for Pittsburgh, which erased 4-1 and 5-3 deficits. Sidney Crosby added two assists to lift his point total to a league-leading 33 and scored in the second round of the shootout against Jonathan Bernier before Malkin finished it off.

James van Riemsdyk scored twice and added an assist for the Maple Leafs. Phil Kessel, Tyler Bozak and Nazem Kadri also scored for Toronto, but the Maple Leafs lost their way after taking a big lead.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Guay fastest in World Cup first training run

Lake Louise. Returning from knee surgery, Quebec skier pushed hard amid ribbing from Europeans

Erik Guay THE CANADIAN PRESS

Erik Guay skied hard and leaned into the finish line, even though it was the first of three training runs for the opening downhill race of the season.

Some racers take it easier in early training runs at World Cups and come out of their racing tuck before the finish area. Guay's intensity Wednesday in Lake Louise drew ribbing from a couple of European competitors along the lines of "save it for race day."

The Canadian's response was a little salty, but the gist of it was he didn't care. The 32-year-old from Mont-Tremblant, Que., was fastest in the first training run of the 2013-14 season. The first World Cup downhill race is Saturday in Lake Louise, Alta.

A knee surgery in July kept Guay from participating in the Canadian team's summer glacier camps. The 2011 world downhill champion didn't get back on snow until earlier this month and he arrived at the Alberta resort thinking he had catching up to do.

"I wanted to go hard. I'm surprised that I'm fast," Guay said. "I didn't think I'd be winning the run. That's why I was tucking until the end."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

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ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	25	16	7	2	69	52	34
Tampa Bay	25	16	8	1	76	63	33
Detroit	26	12	7	7	69	71	31
Toronto	25	14	9	2	71	66	30
Montreal	25	14	9	2	67	52	30
Ottawa	25	10	11	4	74	81	24
Florida	26	7	14	5	58	86	19
Buffalo	26	5	20	1	45	82	11

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	26	16	9	1	78	63	33
NY Rangers	25	13	12	0	53	61	26
Washington	25	12	11	2	76	74	26
Carolina	25	10	10	5	53	70	25
New Jersey	25	9	11	5	53	62	23
Philadelphia	24	10	12	2	52	60	22
Columbus	25	9	13	3	62	75	21
NY Islanders	25	8	14	3	70	85	19

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	25	17	4	4	92	71	38
St. Louis	23	17	3	3	82	50	37
Colorado	22	17	5	0	69	45	34
Minnesota	25	15	6	4	64	58	34
Nashville	25	13	10	2	60	69	28
Winnipeg	27	12	11	4	72	78	28
Dallas	23	12	9	2	67	68	26

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	27	17	7	3	83	71	37
San Jose	23	15	3	5	79	52	35
Los Angeles	25	16	6	3	67	53	35
Phoenix	24	14	6	4	80	78	32
Vancouver	26	12	9	5	67	68	29
Calgary	23	8	11	4	64	84	20
Edmonton	25	7	16	2	65	89	16

Note: 2 points for a win, 1 point for overtime loss.

Wednesday's results
Pittsburgh 6 Toronto 5 (SO)
Winnipeg 3 NY Islanders 2
Ottawa 6 Washington 4
Tampa Bay 4 Philadelphia 2
Carolina 4 New Jersey 3
Nashville 4 Columbus 0
NY Rangers 5 Florida 2
Montreal 3 Buffalo 1
Detroit 6 Boston 1
Phoenix at Minnesota
St. Louis at Colorado
Chicago at Calgary
Los Angeles at San Jose
Tuesday's result
Dallas 6 Anaheim 3
Thursday's games — All times Eastern
Vancouver at Ottawa, 7:30 p.m.
Edmonton at Nashville, 8 p.m.
Friday's games
Winnipeg at Philadelphia, 11:30 a.m.
NY Rangers at Boston, 1 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Tampa Bay, 4 p.m.
Detroit at NY Islanders, 4 p.m.
St. Louis at San Jose, 4 p.m.
Calgary at Anaheim, 4 p.m.
Montreal at Washington, 5 p.m.
Colorado at Minnesota, 6 p.m.
Edmonton at Columbus, 7 p.m.
New Jersey at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Buffalo, 7:30 p.m.
Chicago at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pt
Crosby, Pit	13	18	31
Steen, StL	19	10	29
Getzlaf, Ana	13	15	28
Zetterberg, Det	10	18	28
Ovechkin, Wash	20	7	27
Tavares, NYI	10	17	27
Malkin, Pit	4	23	27
Perry, Ana	13	13	26
Kane, Chi	13	13	26
H. Sedin, Van	7	18	25
Little, Win	12	12	24
Toews, Chi	12	12	24
St. Louis, TBL	10	14	24
Karlsson, Ott	7	17	24
Benn, Dal	7	17	24
Backstrom, Wash	5	19	24
Thornton, SJ	2	22	24
Stamkos, TBL	14	9	23
Seguin, Dal	12	11	23
Datsyuk, Det	12	11	23
Marleau, SJ	11	12	23
Couture, SJ	8	15	23
Kopitar, LA	7	16	23
Ryan, Ott	11	11	22
Parise, Min	11	11	22
Kunitz, Pit	11	11	22

Wednesday's games not included

NFL

WEEK 12
Thursday's games
All times Eastern
Green Bay at Detroit, 12:30 p.m.
Oakland at Dallas, 4:30 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Baltimore, 8:30 p.m.
Sunday's games
Jacksonville at Cleveland, 1 p.m.
New England at Houston, 1 p.m.
Arizona at Philadelphia, 1 p.m.
Miami at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.
Tennessee at Indianapolis, 1 p.m.
Chicago at Minnesota, 1 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Carolina, 1 p.m.
Atlanta at Buffalo, 4:05 p.m.
St. Louis at San Francisco, 4:05 p.m.
Cincinnati at San Diego, 4:25 p.m.
Denver at Kansas City, 4:25 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Washington, 8:30 p.m.
Monday's game
New Orleans at Seattle, 8:40 p.m.

NBA

Wednesday's results
Indiana 99 Charlotte 74
Orlando 105 Philadelphia 94
Memphis 100 Boston 93
Chicago 99 Detroit 79
L.A. Lakers 99 Brooklyn 94
Miami 95 Cleveland 84
Houston 113 Atlanta 84
Oklahoma City 94 San Antonio 88
Denver 117 Minnesota 110
Washington at Milwaukee
Golden State at Dallas
Portland at Phoenix
New York at L.A. Clippers
Tuesday's results
Washington 116 L.A. Lakers 111
Brooklyn 102 Toronto 100
Orlando 109 Atlanta 92
Golden State 102 New Orleans 101

MLS PLAYOFFS

CHAMPIONSHIP

MLS CUP

Saturday, Dec. 7
Kansas City vs. Salt Lake, 4 p.m., EST

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You will be able to charm the birds out of the trees today but why waste your talents on wildlife when you can focus instead on getting your way on the work front? Employers won't be able to say "no".

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Not everyone will agree with what you do over the next 24 hours but do you care? No, you don't! No one has the power to make life difficult for you. So, if it feels good, do it.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Let someone you trust know that your happy -go-lucky act is just that. Once your share your problem, it won't be as bad when various options have been pointed out to you.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
With love planet Venus moving through the relationship area of your chart, you can't afford to be shy with affairs of the heart. If there is someone you fancy, let them know. Chances are they feel the same way about you.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
It's good to dream and some dreams will never come true and it's time you faced up to that fact. Never mind, there should be another great dream coming along soon.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You will be rather impatient today and that may be no bad thing, especially if people you work with are dragging their feet just to annoy you. Maybe you should threaten to carry on without them.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You have the happy knack of knowing what loved ones want and will go out of your way to get it for them over the next 24 hours. Don't forget your own needs though.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Mercury in your sign links with both Venus and Jupiter today, so good news is coming your way. Whatever it happens to be, don't keep it to yourself.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Make sure you know all the facts before reaching a decision about a money or business issue. Remember too that just because someone makes big noise does not mean they know what they are talking about.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Keep things light and don't let the cares of the world get to you. Venus in your sign makes it easy to see past negativity and make sense of what to others appears senseless. Life has meaning, and it is joy.

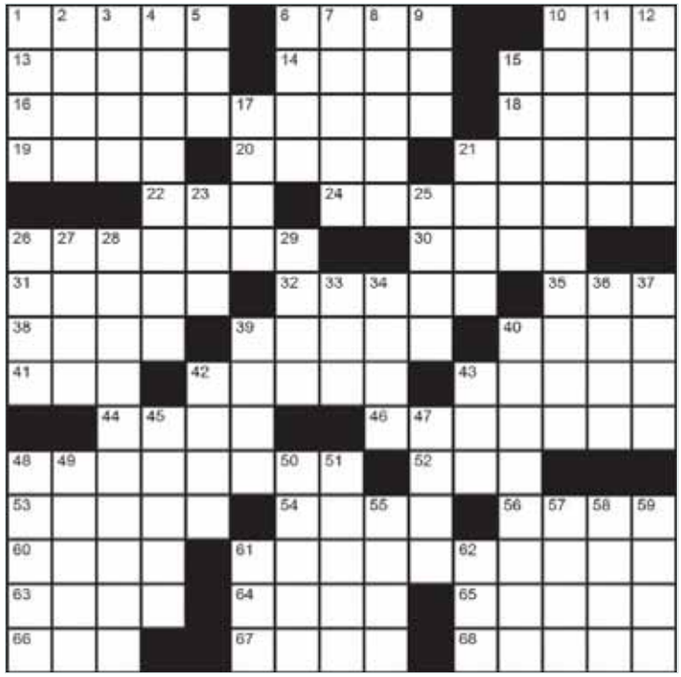
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You can persuade almost anyone to do almost anything for you today but you don't seem happy with that "almost". You may be good with words but don't push too hard. Someone will always be immune to your charms.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
This is an excellent time to travel, ideally with friends. The things you discuss and the things you see will make you glad to be alive in this time and place. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

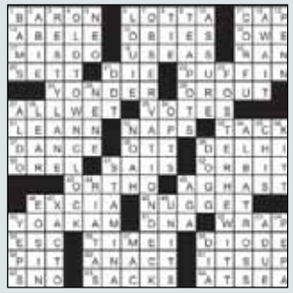
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Glisten
6. Federal force, commonly
10. Juice: French
13. Camera company
14. Margarine
15. Faxed
16. Canadian fashion designer: 2 wds.
18. Cracker spread
19. Tugboat's sound
20. Poetic nights
21. Mr. Schwarzenegger, to fans
22. Spotlight lover
24. Toronto's __ Expressway
26. Saintly
30. Border
31. __ Carta
32. Some beans
35. Li'l physician
38. Balmy
39. Casual material
40. The Dalai __
41. "..._ _ quit!" (Worker's ultimatum)
42. House fields
43. Job-giver
44. Abound
46. Canada __ for the Arts (Administrator of the annual honours at #28-Down)
48. Rihanna hit
52. Carrot, e.g.
53. "Hang Ten" Canadian singer
54. Govern
56. Sicilian volcano
60. Actress, Sharon __
61. As per #28-Down... Fiction book winner: The __ by Eleanor Catton, set in New Zealand
63. Deviate
64. Tunestress Tori
65. Capital of Belarus
66. Antiquity
67. Secret-passer's sound effect
68. Writer W.B. with Reshmi __"
28. _ _ _. __ (Prestigious honour for Canadian writers, trendy-style ...see 2013 winners at #4-Down and #61-Across)
29. Ball of yarn
33. Caravansary
34. Filing abbr.
36. Sacred Buddhist peak
37. Director Mr. Reiner
39. "Curses!"
40. Victoria's Secret apparel
42. Rock's Kings of __
43. Shade
45. Actress Ms. Procter
47. Baking need
48. Search into
49. Model
50. Ringo's instruments
51. Wrestlers of Japan
55. Itemize
57. Frank Sinatra daughter
58. Cozy retreat
59. Requests
61. Swimming segment
62. Ms. Poehler

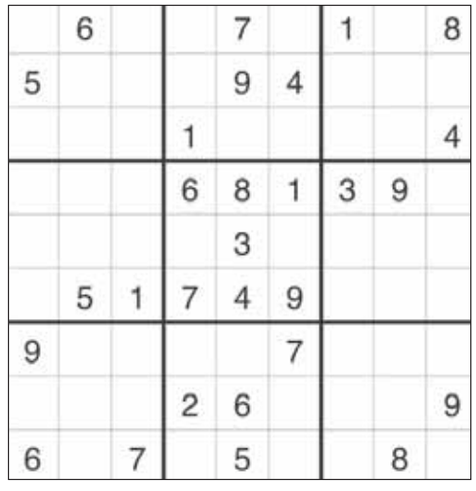
Down
1. Jazz singing style
2. Religious 'ring'
3. Data
4. As per #28-Down... Poetry book winner: Katherena Vermette for __ __ Love Songs, set in the Winnipeg neighbourhood of the title
5. Compass dir.
6. Red __ Tea
7. Held on tightly
8. High IQ society
9. Disc in a 1990s fad game
10. The Maid of Orleans, b.1412 - d.1431: 2 mots
11. Take apart laces
12. Drive
15. Parsley portion
17. Ashton's ex
21. Tots up
23. Menu words
25. Printing quantity
26. G.I.'s weapon need
27. "CBC News Now

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



Yesterday's Sudoku

4	1	9	3	8	5	7	2	6
3	6	5	7	2	1	4	9	8
8	7	2	9	6	4	3	1	5
7	2	6	4	5	8	1	3	9
5	3	8	2	1	9	6	7	4
9	4	1	6	3	7	5	8	2
6	8	4	1	9	3	2	5	7
1	5	7	8	4	2	9	6	3
2	9	3	5	7	6	8	4	1

Weather

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MAX: 9° MIN: -6°	MAX: 1° MIN: -4°	MAX: 5° MIN: -5°

BT BREAKFAST TELEVISION

ANDREW SCHULTZ
METEOROLOGIST
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WEEKDAYS 5:30 AM

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